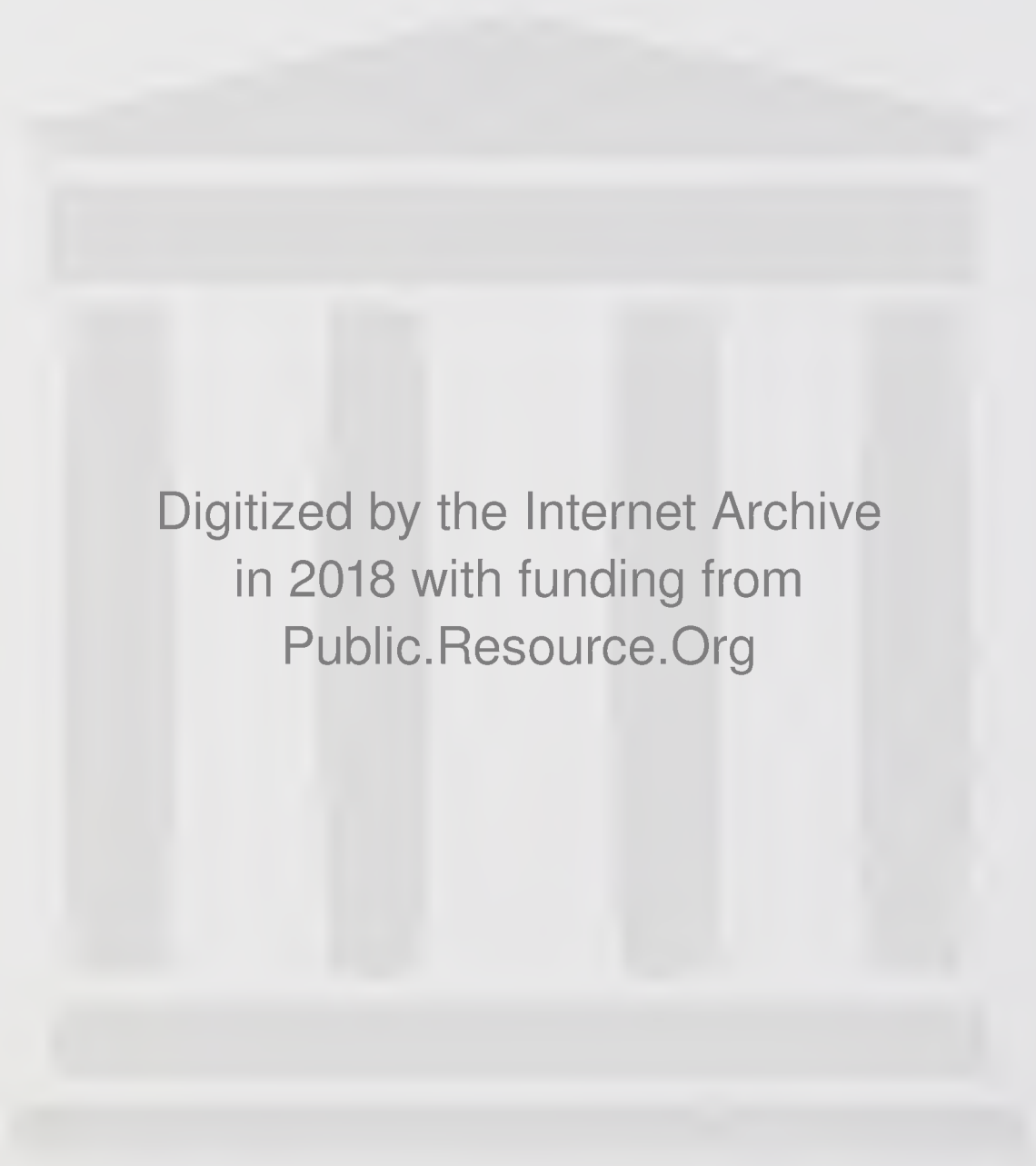


Satguru Ram Singh *and* Kuka Movement



Tara Singh Anjan



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Satguru Ram Singh and Kuka Movement

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Dedicated to
150 Years of
The Great Sacrifices of
Kuka Movement

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THE POLITICAL SCENARIO

INDIA IS A rich country in natural resources. It is a land of crystal clear river waters and the most fertile landscapes. Its history dates back to the evolution of culture. While its abundant natural resources enriched the countrymen, these also invited the greedy plunderers, even from far off countries. For hundreds and thousands of years, the plunderers attacked and looted it and forcibly set up their governments. They came via the North-West route. Most of the attacking tribes settled here and assimilated into the local populace. The self respecting nationalists never bowed down before them but the common people subjugated themselves to their command. While some opportunists helped them and betrayed the nation, others were trying to get security by either praising their religion or adopting it. These invaders were the Asians only.

From sixteenth century onwards, foreigners started coming to Indian sub-continent from the South-East. They had come with the sole intention of trade and preaching of religion but taking advantage of the situation, set up their governments. They were the white coloured Europeans, the Firangi.

The Portuguese started expanding in India after entering through Calicut, defeating the Arabs in 1505. They captured Goa, Daman and Diu, set up their trading houses and established their rule in Mumbai and Srilanka. But the situation changed there also, when Spain captured Portugal.

In 1604, the Dutch from Holland came via the South-Eastern route. Taking advantage of the weaknesses of the Portuguese, they also set up their trading houses at Surat, Bhrauch, Ahmedabad, Cochin, Patna, Agra, etc. They traded in robin blue, raw silk, cotton clothes, opium, nitre, rice, etc. in foreign markets. They started establishing their forts also. But they were routed because of the British-Dutch war in Europe.

The British set up the East India Company in the last year of the 16th century and headed for India. The fleet led by Captain William Hawkins dropped anchor at the little port of Surat on 24th August, 1600.¹ He had carried a letter from King James I and therefore he received a rousing welcome. Ambassador Sir Thomas Roe of King James-I was greatly honoured in the Royal Court of Moghul emperor Jahangir. His visit to India from September 1615 to 1618 has historical importance. He was a learned courtier. He understood well the weaknesses of drunkard, glutton and wayward king Jahangir.

The British set up their first regal house at Surat in 1612 after obtaining permission from the King. They also set up similar trading houses in Ahmedabad, Agra and Machhlipattnam. They also constructed Saint George Fort in Madras after obtaining permission from the King of Vijainagar. They started trading in nitre, goond, opium, raw wax, Kasturi, etc. besides spinned cotton, raw sugar, silk and printing cloth. King Charles II, allowed the Company to issue its own currency and keep army for their protection. The Company started expanding to Bengal, Hyderabad and Mumbai. It entered into a trade agreement with the Marathas.

The French were keeping an eagle's eye on the flourishing British influence and followed suit. They landed at Puducherry (Pondicherry) and nourished the dream of exploring further. They were attracted by the weakening Moghul kingdom. In 1742, the French Governor Dupleix started conspiring to set up French empire in India. This was the main cause of bitterness and the war between the British and the French. By 1763, they had fought three wars of Carnatic. Though the British had defeated the French in these wars, they returned the captured territories of Puducherry, Mahe and Chandernagar to the French under an agreement entered into in Paris.

The British expanded to Bengal. They defeated Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in a fierce battle at Pallassey in 1757 under the command of Lord Clive. They played a treacherous dirty game and intrigued with General Mir Zaffar by offering to make him the

Nawab who switched over to their side. In 1764, the British defeated Mir Kasim at Buxar, subjecting Bengal under their rule. From there, they began their march to subjugate the entire Indian nation.²

The Moghul Emperors had become very weak by that time. They were neither capable of fighting the Marathas in the South nor could they defeat Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah in Punjab. The Jats had established their rule from Agra to Delhi. Even if the Rajputs had set up their own empire and declared independence, the Moghuls would not have been able to do anything. Nadir Shah Irani had also come to know of their weaknesses and the voluptuousness of the Moghul emperor Mohammad Shah Rangeela. The great warrior as he was, he overthrew the rulers of Iran, captured Kandhar and Ghazni and headed for India. In 1739, he reached Karnal after capturing Kabul, Peshawar and Lahore. No one dare stop his advancing forces. At Karnal, the Rangeela king tried to halt his march by assembling his disintegrated force but could offer no resistance and was forced to enter into an agreement. On 20th March, 1739 at Delhi khutba (emblem of sovereignty) was ready for Nadir Shah. But after two days, a rumour spread that Nadir Shah had suddenly died. The residents of Delhi killed hundreds and thousands of his soldiers. Enraged Nadir Shah, took a revenge. He let loose his army. Delhi was looted, burnt and massacred. Many historians put the death toll at twenty thousand while others give the count as one and a half lakh. Everyone was killed indiscriminately without caring for whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, young or old, male or female. Mohammad Shah Rangeela was helpless. He was not spared even after paying a hefty 30 crore rupees in cash, precious jewels, gold and silver, 100 elephants, 7,000 horses, Peacock Throne and the marriage of royal princess with Nasir Allah Mirza, son of Nadir Shah. He was made to vacate and handover Kashmir and Sind.³

Nadir Shah had tasted the blood. He invaded a number of times at regular intervals till 1747. He plundered and played with the chastity of women folk. He used to carry as captives thousands of young beautiful girls from India. But he was stopped on his way

back by the religiously consecrated groups of Sikhs, the Khalsa. In 1739, while going back after the invasion and the plunder, the tail end of his long army march while crossing the Chenab river near Akhnoor was attacked by the Sikhs. The Sikh attackers snatched away the plundered booty and rescued a large number of captured women and sent them back to their homes.

The defeated, attacked and plundered Nadir Shah, a large number of whose soldiers were killed asked Subedar (Chieftain) Zakaria Khan of Lahore as to who these plunderers were and where did they come from. The Subedar told him that they were the Sikh warriors who pay their obeisance and take inspiration from their temporal authority, especially the Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple). They were warriors and spend most of their time on the back of their horses. Nadir Shah predicted that one day they will certainly be the rulers.

After Nadir Shah, from 1748 to 1771, Ahmad Shah Abdali repeatedly raided India, especially Panjab and looted whatever came his way. The Marathas put up a stiff resistance but were badly defeated in the war of Panipat on 14th January, 1761. They lost the 75,000 strong army and their dream of establishing their rule over India was shattered.

The Sikhs however never allowed Abdali to live in peace. Even while the phrase “eat and drink whatever comes your way, rest every thing, Abdali would take away” was very popular, but the Sikhs were establishing themselves as a power. The Dal Khalsa came into being on 29th March, 1748 under the command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Eleven more Sikh Sardars (warriors) were chosen to lead the groups of fighters, known as ‘Misals’. These ‘Misals’ set up their petty empires in Panjab. They bore the brunt of the Moghuls and their Subedars (Chieftains), faced deaths and destruction in minor and major wars but never subjugated themselves and firmly remained resolved to fight the Moghuls. Sufi saint Buleh Shah had reflected on the contemporary situation:

“Oh God, there is anarchy everywhere
Panjab was badly mauled.

The violent were ruling the roost
forcing the Moghuls eat the humble pie”⁴

The famous poet Sayyed Waris Shah writes in his
renowned work ‘Heer’:

When the Jats were the rulers
it was a new government everywhere.

The entire country was in turmoil
as the anarchists held the sway.⁵

They were the followers of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. They recited their scriptures and had faith in the Gurudwaras (their religious places). They respected women folk and protected their honour. They were the men with high moral values. They never had any ill will against any religion or caste. They had faith in one God and meditated from the scriptures. The Sikhs never hesitated to sacrifice their lives to protect honour. The urban and the rural masses considered them as their protectors. So they continued to win the confidence of the people alongside mustering their own fighting strength. They led a pious life.

With the passage of time, the Sikh power was centered in the hands of the able head of the Shukarchakya Misal Ranjit Singh. Sikh rule was established under Maharaja (king) Ranjit Singh. He was consecrated to the throne by Baba Sahib Singh Bedi on 12th April, 1801.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, first of all conquered all weak Misals to make his regime a strong kingdom. He did not spare even friendly and powerful Misals. The Maratha leader Jaswant Rao Holkar, after a humiliating defeat at the hands of the British turned to Maharaja Ranjit Singh for help, recognizing his growing power. The Maharaja was fully aware of the growing influence of the British. Therefore, he avoided Holkar. The Maharaja, the ruler of Lahore had talks with the representatives of the British and an agreement was reached on 1st January, 1806 that none will protect

the enemy of the other friend as also will not interfere in each other's affairs.

Though the British had established their rule over Bengal and their home country England was appointing the Governor Generals as the head of Bengal but they only had the civil rights in Bihar and Orissa. The Nawabs of Oudh acted in accordance with their wishes. The South West states of Carnatic, Mysore, Mumbai etc. all danced to the tune of the British and if somebody dare defy them, he was made to obey with force. The position of the king of the Moghul empire was like a castigated bird in a cage. The English felt, the only one who did not surrender before them was Panjab.

Lahore was the capital city of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the display of fighting power in Panjab, he appeared to be forcing every ruler to submit to his power. He headed for Malwa in 1806 and advanced towards Patiala, leading 20,000 strong armymen. Maharaja Sahib Singh of Patiala honoured him. The rulers of Patiala were used to keeping off the troubles and as such they sent back Maharaja Ranjit Singh happily after honouring him with precious gifts. On way back to Lahore, he conquered Ludhiana, Raikot and Jagraon, etc. The rulers of Kaithal, Kalsian states etc. pleased him by giving precious gifts. But all rulers, including that of Jind were afraid of his growing power. They approached the British Resident Seton in Delhi in a representative group and requested him for protection. The British liked these developments.

The British dispatched the able negotiators Charles Metcaef and Commander Sir David Achterlony to Lahore to talk to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The talks culminated into an agreement signed on 25th April, 1809. Under the agreement, the Maharaja had to agree to recognize river Sutlej as the border of his empire. He had to abdicate the Faridkot, Malerkotla and Ambala states despite conquering them. As interference in each other's affairs was a violation of the 1806 agreement, Maharaja Ranjit Singh turned his forces to other areas for expansion of his empire. In 1814, he grabbed the most precious stone, the pride of the crown, Kohinoor diamond from Shah Sujah. In the words of Shah Mohammad:

Maharaja Ranjit Singh came on the horizon
shook the entire region and captured
Multan, Kashmir, Pishor, Chamba
and Jammu Kangra fort
His currency was in circulation
from Ladakh to China
Shah Mohammad says during the 50 year rule
Ranjit Singh ruled to the hilt.⁶

(Wars between the Sikhs and the British)

The British kept a close watch on the developments in the surroundings and took appropriate steps. They opened a Christian Missionary in Ludhiana in 1834. It began conversions of unsuspecting, economically weak and backward people as Christians. This was continuing for a long time in other parts of India.

The British were monitoring closely the gains of the Maharaja. They were offering him friendly help and making an assessment of his growing power.

In 1826, they dispatched Dr. Murray during the illness of the Maharaja. He stayed in Lahore for sometime. The Maharaja made this excuse to get acquainted.

In 1827, the British Governor General Lord Amherst came to Shimla. A mission was sent in his service. In 1831, the Governor General of India Lord William Bentinck came to Shimla. A delegation of the Sikhs sent by the Maharaja met him in Shimla. The Company sent Sikander Burns to Lahore to assess the military power of the Maharaja. He reached Lahore via Sindh. He gave a detailed account of the huge military power of the Maharaja. William Bentinck and the Maharaja had talks in Ropar. The Maharaja was informed that the agreement with Sindh was purely a commercial agreement.

Under the pretext that Russians were advancing from Central Asia, the Company set up a Cantonment in Ferozepure in

1835. It did not care for the opposition and the anger of the Maharaja against this action. In 1837, the Maharaja invited all friendly individuals at the marriage of his grandson Kanwar Naunihal Singh (son of crown prince Kharag Singh). The Governor General of India General Lord Auckland alongwith Sir Charles Metcaefe, Governor of Agra and the Commaner-in-Chief of the Indian army General Sir Henry Fain participated. The rulers of Indian states also participated. They were bewitched at the big show, the profuse welcome, military power and the presents they received. It was a great show.

The people in the vast kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh lived a happy life. He was a household name. In the words of Joseph David Cunningham:

“Maharaja Ranjit Singh had touched the climax of his popularity. He was the judge to decide the fate of the empire which had perpetrated the deepest wounds on his ancestors. The alien rulers of India had opened special channels with him.”⁷

(Sikh History)

Even though Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the Sher-e-Punjab (Lion of Punjab) who conquered and achieved victory after victory but he always felt inferior in his relations with the East India Company. He often remained sick and was always overtaken by the worry that he was not able to establish the roots of his empire firmly. In the words of N.K. Sinha:

“In the last decade of his career, Ranjit Singh was a pathetic figure, hapless and inert, petit and often sick person. He feared to expose the kingdom he had created to the risk of war and instead chose the policy of yielding, yielding and yielding.”⁸

(Ranjit Singh)

Khushwant Singh writes about the meeting between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Lord Auckland in November 1838:

“The conditionalities of the tripartite agreement were already set. Therefore, the Ferozepur meeting was mainly arranged for entertainment, drink sessions and dancing.”⁹ (History of the Sikhs)

Soon after, the Maharaja had a paralytic attack and was not able to get up from the bed to say goodbye to Auckland. The Maharaja breathed his last in June 1839 and with this, the bad days for Panjab began.

By that time, the British had politically subjugated the whole of India. The rulers of more than 500 states were called the kings and the Maharajas and the Nawabs but their rights were limited to enjoyment and commit atrocities against the weak and the poor. They dreaded even the shadow of their masters. If at all somebody tried to put up resistance, he was crushed.

The British formulated acts and rules and regulations to run their administration efficiently and to make trade more profitable. They brought in some reforms also. During the rule of Lord William Bentinck (1828-35), some laws were framed to stop sacrifice on pyre (sati) by women and to kill the girl child at birth as also to wipe out treacherous persons. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Devinder Nath Tagore appreciated them for this cause.

The British instead of propagating and improving the traditional education system, formulated a new education policy. The new policy was based on the English medium education and to teach the western system of education. Lord Macaulay is considered the author of this policy.

Macaulay came to India on 10th June, 1834 as Law Member of the Council of Governor General. He was a learned scholar of English literature and a very fluent orator. He was made the head of the Public Instruction Committee. This Committee was to take a decision whether the medium of instructions should be the English language or the languages of the East. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a member of this Committee. The Committee submitted its minutes on 2nd February, 1835 which out rightly rejected the Arabic and Sanskrit as medium of instructions. While favouring English as the medium of instructions, Macaulay wrote:

“At present, we should create such a group of people who may act as a mediator between us and the common man, a class of

persons, Indian in blood and colour but British in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect. It will be their duty to develop the native languages and enable these to convey the knowledge to common people.”¹⁰

There is no doubt that he wanted to create a class of people who would be faithful to the British. However, a letter from Macaulay to his father in 1836 clears his intentions:

“Our English schools are increasing leaps and bounds and now the situation has reached a position that it has become difficult to accommodate the students. Hindus are much influenced by education. There is no Hindu who may keep real faith in his religion after studying English. I have full confidence that if our education policy succeeds, no idolator will be left in Bengal. All this will be done naturally, without any religious preaching and interference.”¹¹

Macaulay wrote to create inferiority complex among the Indians that just one book shelf of English literature is worth more than the entire Indian and Arabic literature.

The implementation and spread of this education policy dragged the Hindus and the Muslims away from their rich heritage of religion and literature.

By the 21st century, the railway network had criss-crossed the country. But the first train from Howrah to Hoogly had steamed off on 15th August, 1854 during Lord Dalhousie’s time. The Company introduced the train services with the sole aim of making goods haulage for trading purposes and passenger communication more easy, less expensive and the most profitable.. From 1863 to 1872, train services had expanded between Amritsar, Allahabad and Agra.

During the prime time of the Sikh rule and the expansion of the Company administration to new areas, a male child was born to a carpenter in a relatively unknown village Raiyan in Ludhiana district. He was given the name of Ram Dhan by his father Jassa Singh. This boy turned as Satguru Ram Singh and with his good deeds brought revolution in religious, social, cultural and political

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੨ ਬਾਰ੍ਹਵੀਂ।



Satguru Ram Singh ji



Founder of Struggle for Independence Satguru Ram Singh ji with some active Subas and other Sikhs



Preparations underway for deporting Satguru Ram Singh ji and disciple Nanu Singh from Kolkatta to Yangon – 1872



Sant Mihan Singh entering the Margoi Bungalo of Satguru Ram Singh ji, secretly, giving a slip to the security guards

By 1837, Guru Ram Singh grew into a tall, handsome man. His brother-in-law Kabul Singh who was himself a JCO in Lahore army got Ram Singh recruited in the platoon of Prince Naunihal Singh. The reception given to the guests, Governor General Auckland, Sir Charles Metcafe, Governor of Agra and other friends at the time of the marriage ceremony of Prince Naunihal Singh, the same year was the talk of the town in the Khalsa army. Whenever the Satguru heard about it, he used to ponder over it. He was a God fearing person. He used to cook for himself and used to lead a pious life. Because of him, his Regiment came to be known as the Regiment of the Bhagats.

He felt that Sikh moral values were being degraded in the Sikh army. Money was being spent wrecklessly on enjoyment. They were drunkards and corrupt. They enjoyed dancing by whores and the mocking copying by the *dums and Marasies* (lowly placed amateur groups). The *Gulabdasiye* (menials) were their religious leaders. They had no moral values what could they offer to others? The downfall of the Sikh morality was clearly visible to the Satguru. It was only a thin political curtain away.

“Maharaja Ranjit Singh had bound the Sikhs for fulfillment of his dream with all his mite, intelligence and treachery.”¹⁴

(From Rabindra Nath Tagore's writings 'Itihas')

When the Satguru saw danger to this unity, he opined “The White coloured will have upper hand in Lahore also. The British will play muck there. The kingdom will be lost because of the traitors.” These tales were carried to the Maharaja who summoned the Satguru through Kotwal Dula Singh. The Satguru repeated his words before the Maharaja and was put behind the bars under his orders.

From his heart of hearts, the Maharaja was afraid of that the utterances of this lofty fellow might not come true. He himself called the British band from Ludhiana and conveyed the message to the Satguru by making the band play in Lahore and the Cantonment and released him from jail.

Whenever the Satguru, came on leave and passed through Ludhiana on way home, he was deeply pained to see the spread of the Christian missionaries, which he felt was not good for the country.

The black shadow of doom befell as soon as the Maharaja breathed his last on 27th June, 1839. Four queens and seven maid servants fell to doom at his pyre. One of the Queens Katochan felt that the Prime Minister Dhyan Singh Dogra could play a bad game and therefore she took a promise from him to remain faithful to Crown Prince Kharag Singh.¹⁵ He gave the 'evidence' of this faithfulness when within three to four months Maharaja Kharag Singh's most loved friend Chet Singh Bajwa was killed on 8th October, 1839. The Maharaja cried:

“Chet Singh was killed by Kaur Singh
the fight began in the court
Maharaja Kharag Singh cried
my beloved friend is dead.”¹⁶

(War between the Sikhs and the British – Shah Mohammad)

After about one year, Maharaja Kharag Singh and Prince Naunihal Singh were also killed. Queen Chand Kaur was given a privy purse. Baba Bikram Singh Bedi performed the coronation ceremony for Maharaja Sher Singh on 27th January, 1841.

A unit of Prince Naunihal Singh platoon was despatched from Lahore to Peshawar in 1841 to bring the Royal coffers from there. Satguru Ram Singh was part of this group.

This unit of the army had just reached the bank of the river Attock when it met the army from Peshawar with the Royal coffers. It handed over the Royal treasury and went back. The Army unit reached the Hazro Fort and stopped for rest.

Baba Jamiat Singh Gill went away to pay his obeisance to Satguru Balak Singh. He was baptized as an ardent follower (given *Naam*). Later Satguru Ram Singh went there along with about 25 army men to pay respects to the great saint and sat there in

reverence. Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal writes:

“An elated Guru Balak Singh welcomed (Satguru) Ram Singh and said that he was waiting for him.

I have given *Naam* (baptized) to such a large number of armymen to inspire you to come here. After this, none from the army will ask me for baptizing. Now, it is a mental relief to me that you have come and my resolve has been fulfilled. Guru Balak Singh passed on devotional hymn (*Guru mantra*) to Satguru Ram Singh and said pass it on secretly, keep it secret and recite it in your heart of hearts. If you speak it loudly, it will go waste. Guruji said, oh Lord, I am just a caretaker. I was waiting for you only. Now you have come. Only you have to give *Naam* (baptize) and pass on this secret hymn to the followers. Only you have to spread this message.

He gave a handful of sugar bubbles (*Patase*) to Satguru Ram Singh. Satguru Balak Singh offered a coconut and five paise to Satguru Ram Singh and took five rounds around him in reverence and bowed before him.”¹⁷

(Satguru Bilas Part I, Editor Jaswinder Singh)

Those who were fortunate enough to watch this heavenly change of power were the great Sikhs of the Khalsa army: Subedar Kahn Singh, Vadda Chak, Matab Singh, Uboke, Dula Singh Rajeanian, Anokh Singh Billian-Jullundhar, Baghel Singh Raja Jang-Lahore, Jota Singh Dhapai, Matab Singh Hathoor-Ludhiana, Kahn Singh Ferozepur, Harsa Singh Kanganpuri and others.

The army unit returned to Lahore with the treasury after paying obeisance on way back at Panja Sahib.

The Lahore Darbar became a place of growing anarchy. The British rulers were watching these developments with an evil eye. They sent a goodwill mission to Lahore on 23rd April, 1842. The reality was otherwise. The mission visited Lahore to assess the political conditions prevailing there and to decide on further steps accordingly.

The Lahore Darbar was a bed of thorns. Conspiracies were being hatched as a result of which Queen Chand Kaur, Maharaja Sher Singh, Prince Pratap Singh, Prime Minister Dhyan Singh Dogra, Ajit Singh and Lahina Singh Sandhanwalia were eliminated by 1843 one after the other. The five year old youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Prince Dalip Singh was crowned the King after coronation and ascended the throne. The minor was incapable of stopping the intrigues going on in the Court.

The Satguru came on leave to Bhaini Sahib in 1845 but he had hardly any time to sit with his family and share good and bad events that he was recalled.

According to one source of information, the British Governor General Lord Harding had invaded Panjab. The fears of a fierce battle were lurking large. The Satguru went back to join his Unit. Preparations were made to encounter the British army in December, 1845. The Guru was asked to pray for the victory of the army at the time of the departure of the army platoon 'Bhagtan Wali' for the battle field. Looking in the direction of the sunrise, he stood praying with closed eyes and folded hands. He reflected back and looking at the misdoings of the Khalsa pronounced his inner voice saying that prayer or no prayer, there are no indications of a win for the Khalsa army. He refused to pray for the success of the Sikh army unit. He also resigned from the army and returned home.

Under orders from its Commander Tej Singh, the Khalsa army reached Mudki. A fierce fighting broke out on 18th December, 1845. Because of the treacherous moves of the traitors and opportunist leaders, unfaithful Generals, pleasure seeking rich individuals vagabonds, Sardars and Chieftains loyal to the British, the Khalsa army was defeated at the crucial moment when it was at the threshold of winning. The sacrifices of great warriors went in vain. The Khalsa army met the same fate in the battle fields at Pheru Shahar (*city*), Badowal, Aliwal and Sabhrawan. The contemporary nationalist poet Shah Mohammad who was sympathetic to the Sikh army described the absence of the command

of Sher-e-Panjab like Maharaja Ranjit Singh as the reason for the defeat of the Khalsa army:

“War broke out between the Panjab and Indian forces
the armies of both rulers were fully prepared
If there was an able ruler, he would have honoured
the valiant fighters of the Khalsa army
the army men fell prey to the spray of bullets
the elephants were killed with the war gear on
Shah Mohammad laments that lack of a good ruler
saw the defeat of the army when it was about to win.”¹⁸

(Shah Mohammad – War between the Sikhs and the British)

The Khalsa army was forced to sign two treaties on 9th and 12th March, 1846 after its defeat in the battle of Sabhrawan. As a result, the Lahore ruler had to pay battle expenses to the British and his army was pruned, Henry Lawrence was appointed as Resident in Lahore. On behalf of the British Frederick Curry and Henry Lawrence and the Lahore Durbar and on behalf of the minor Maharaja, Dalip Singh, Bhai Ram Singh, Lal Singh, Tej Singh, Chatar Singh Attariwala, Ranjodh Singh Majithia, Dewan Dina Nath and Noor-ud-din signed the Treaties. The first three of them were the stooges of the British and the biggest traitors. It was like a cat being asked to keep a watch over milk.

Henry started cutting at the roots of the Panjabi culture which was expected of him. He started disgracing and humiliating Queen Jindan and kept her away from minor Maharaja Dalip Singh.

The Resident issued an order on 24th March, 1847 about the sanctity of Harmandir Sahib, under which he proclaimed:

“The priest of Amritsar having complained of harassment, this is to make known to all concerned that by the order of the Governor General, British subjects are forbidden to enter the temple, called the Durbar or its precincts at Amritsar, or indeed any temple, with their shoes on.

Kine are not to be killed in Amritsar, nor are the Sikhs to be harassed or in any way interfered with their religion.

Shoes are to be taken off at the Bungas (minarets) in the corners of the holy tank. No person is to walk around the tank with his shoes on.

Sd/-

Henry H. Lawrence
Resident ¹⁹

Lahore

March 24th, 1847

The British knew that not only in Panjab but also in the whole of India, the devout Hindustani, Buddhists, Jains, Hindus and Sikhs are against the killing of the cow and eating its meat (beef). In Panjab, even the Muslims did not take cow meat as in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's regime, the punishment for killing a cow was death penalty which was for no other crime.

When the British were to go to Afghanistan for the coronation of Shah Shujah in 1838, they were to pass through Punjab. The Panjab Government had put a condition that they will observe the ban on cow slaughter.

On 21st April, 1846 after the 1845-46 first war between the Sikhs and the British, a guard at the armory in Lahore attacked cows with his sword injuring three or four of them. This infuriated the people and all Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in Lahore went on a strike. When Lawrence reached Lahore, he was attacked with brickbats from inside a house. Without caring for the sentiments of the people, he sentenced to death Dutt Brahmin and Rulia Mishra. Two others were expatriated from the British ruled areas. The house from where the brick batting came was demolished. The guard was let off with only a warning. In this manner, they easily got the beef. They repeated similar sentiments in Amritsar.

The last of the independent states in India, Panjab fell to the East India Company on 29th March, 1849. Kirpal Singh Kasel writes:

“After taking over Darbar, the British lowered the flag of the independent country hoisted at the Royal Fort and in its place hoisted their own flag, the Union Jack taking great pride amidst the booming out of the guns.²⁰

(History Sant Khalsa)

Those loyal to the Company were rewarded with fiefdoms, awards, positions, leadership and titles thus creating a new class of humble loyal servants.

After resigning from the Army, Satguru Ram Singh went straight to his maternal uncle Hari Singh's house in Ludhiana. On refusal by the boatman to take him across the river Satluj, he walked along the river bank and crossed it swimming at Phillaur. His maternal aunt prayed for his well being and for reaching home safely. His maternal uncle was a follower of Baba Gurditta and he prayed to him for the welfare of Satguru Ram Singh.

He came to know from his maternal aunt that he was blessed with a son but he had died. He had two daughters – Bibi Nand Kaur and Bibi Daya Kaur.

When he reached the village, he was crying to make mother Jassan realize that he was greatly aggrieved at the death of his son. In his village he raised crops in collaboration with village head Sukhu and Khema Jat. He helped his father Jassa Singh in his carpentry. He used to get up in the wee hours, relieve himself from the daily chores and used to be ready very early after a bath and daily hair wash at the well. Thereafter, he sat at the Akal Bunga (*Minaret*) and prayed to God and pondered over how he could do something to improve the lot of the country.

The village people respected him as a God fearing and honest person, a believer in dignity of labour but Hamira Jat always picked up a quarrel with him. Therefore, he did not feel at home. He left his village, went to Raiyan and entered into partnership with village head Jeevan Singh who never allowed him to do any heavy work. The village people, out of respect used to call him Bhai Ji.

When Hamira Jat put a spoke and objected to his building his kutchra house at Bhaini Sahib, he pronounced that as the kutchra bricks made to build house melt in water, Hamira will also meet the same fate. Hamira went on a pilgrimage to goddess Jwalaji and soon after coming back, met the same fate and he died.

The villagers were haunted by the fear that a curse will befall on their village and they might have to suffer. They dispatched Satguru's childhood friend Lahina Singh son of Ruldu Singh to persuade Satguru Ram Singh to come back to his village from Raiyan village. Khema and Bhoora also went with him. Lahina Singh told him that he had three pieces of land in the village and offered that he could construct his house on any one of these and he must come back to the village. After taking a promise, he left Raiyan village in 1848 and made his permanent residence at Bhaini Sahib. Both brothers constructed two houses and a courtyard in front of these.

The British rulers offered contracts for the construction of Ferozepur cantt, a fort and roads. His maternal uncle's son Khazan Singh who got one such contract called him over there in 1850 to help him in his work. He placed Adi Granth Sahib in one of the rooms for daily recitation. After day's hard labour, the artisans and labourers used to gather there for prayers every morning and evening. All had faith in Satguruji. They used to invoke his blessings for fulfillment of their needs. Artisan Heera Singh said that his children die after birth and invoked his blessings to stop it. Artisan Nihal Singh prayed that he has a good earning but lacks prosperity. The Satguru consoled them and asked them to have faith in God and everything would be alright. Their desire was fulfilled. Others also started having faith in the Satguru.

He returned to Bhaini Sahib in 1855 after completion of the job in Ferozepur. Khazan Singh went back to Ludhiana. Later, the Satguru learnt that he had died. He went to his maternal uncle's house but he had gone to Haridwar to immerse his ashes. His maternal uncle also died on the way. He consoled his maternal aunt and her daughter-in-law Bholi.

His maternal aunt Rami was quite rich. She asked him to trade in grains at fifty fifty profit basis. The Satguru purchased grain with the help of his trusted friend Ran Singh. The mixed grain of wheat, barley and gram was priced at the rate of five to six maunds a rupee (one maund is approximately 37 Kilos), wheat at four and a half maund to a rupee and ghee eight seer to a rupee (one seer is approximately 910 grams). He purchased the grains and kept in the shop. He also kept iron, clothes and household articles in the shop which he set up in the village. He used to take one anna (six paise) profit for one rupee. The goods were sold in the right measure and as such his shop had a good business. People from nearby villages also used to buy their necessities from his shop. Satguruji used to give her share of profit to his maternal aunt Rami. His honest dealings gave him a good reputation.

People used to flock to his shop to have a glimpse of Satguru Ram Singh, listen to his discourses and buy their necessities from his shop. Most of them felt that they got mental solace along with meeting their daily necessities. One individual, Gonda Khatri came to him never to go back. His companions from the Lahore Durbar also started visiting him. The shop gave a good room for the sittings. Chak Subedar Kahn Singh Nihang also came to him. From Durgapur Sudh Singh, holyman Dayal Dass and others also came to him. Asked by Dayal Dass to visit them, he said he would visit at the appropriate time. Many people, who came to visit the Guru, stayed back and helped him in his work. Waryam Singh Jhotarh managed his agricultural operations, Gopal Singh from Rukharh village managed his shop. Satguru Balak Singh sent back from Hazro Labh Singh Ragi, a blind man and others to Guru Ram Singh when they went to him for *Naam* (baptizing). He himself visited Hazro once to meet Satguru Balak Singh. He asked the Satguru to give *Naam* (baptize) whosoever came to him craving for it.

His companions from Lahore used to tell him about the treacherous way of functioning of the British and how they took Maharaja Dalip Singh to England. They told him the manner in which Queen Jindan was imprisoned in Benaras from where she

escaped disguising herself as a beggar woman. They told him how Maharaj Singh was expatriated to Singapore, declaring him a threat to the nation. He died there on 5th July 1856. Dewan Mool Raj was arrested in Lahore and sent to Allahabad prison. He died on the way while he was being shifted to Benaras on 11th August, 1851. Chatar Singh Attariwala and his son were first imprisoned in Attari and later shifted to Allahabad and finally imprisoned in St. Fort William in Kolkatta. Chatar Singh died in 1885. The British thus gave punishment to all those expressing sympathies with the Sikh rule. The Sikh Army was disarmed. More than one lakh twenty thousand soldiers were disarmed of their swords and rifles. If anybody had private weapons, these were also called through the village head. The army men of the Khalsa Army were given pension and sent to their homes. 8,000 people were put behind the bars. An atmosphere of terror was sought to be created.

The British writ ran throughout the country. They had with them public administration, education, courts and spread of religion. The spread of Christianity was on the increase. They used to call themselves as superior, criticized Indian religions and culture and laughed at these. They were free to propagate their religion among the imprisoned persons also. Golak Nath Masih was deputed from Ludhiana for the propagation of Christianity in Lahore Fort. Christian Hospitals, Churches and Missionary Schools were opened in all major cities in Panjab. The Government used to patronize them and give them financial aid. The British officers also used to make donations to them. Thus the Missionary institutions were flourishing.

It was no secret that Maharaja Dalip Singh had embraced Christianity. He was inspired by John Logan. Lord Dalhousie was

The British wanted to convert the religion, society and the country according to their convenience. The Hindus and Sikhs were also disgusted with their religious and social rites, virtues and life style.

The Sikhs had perhaps turned their back to their code of

theological conduct. They followed the Dera priests, preachers and religious heads. Many of them became followers of Ramrais and Gulabdasias while some followed Baba Gurditta. Many others became the followers of Bedis and Sodhis, from the genealogy of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Some had belief in the prayer of their dead dear ones, some in the gods and goddesses and others in their ancestors. Giani Gian Singh had portrayed the contemporary Sikhs rites and customs:

Their ancestors used to recite
 from the holy book in the wee hours
 they did not take anything without recitation
 from the holy book
 their progeny, what to talk of the holy rituals
 hardly looked at the holy book and kept it aside
 they did not recite the *Japuji* (morning) or *Rahiras*
 (evening) prayers
 and whosoever performed these rituals
 they were laughed at
 they asked whether the God was deaf as
 recitations were loud
 they asked to find out God elsewhere and please him
 they followed different rituals
 had different company and affection
 their eating, dressing, knowledge and honour
 became entirely different
 to them the turban was heavy and unmanageable
 they stopped wearing customary underwear
 and put on long cloth
 they started wearing loose fitting trousers
 and long loose robes
 watching all this, the hapless Sikhs would shudder in fear
 as the fear of the Turkish gun.
 Guru's following for the Sikhs became alien

they took pride in breaking the rituals
and dressing like a vagabond.²¹ (Sri Guru Panth Prakash)

The Sikhs used drugs, visited prostitutes, took meat and disrespected the head hair. They had no faith in Sikhism. They were mentally depressed and had no self respect. In such conditions, to prepare them for war became a distant dream.

Satguru Ram Singh felt that a new sense of pride should be instilled into the Sikhs. The reformation should begin at home. Sikhs should become men of good virtues observing their code of theological rituals. They should guard their principles. A strong will power was the only way to counter the growing influence of Christianity spread by the British Church. This was the only way to escape from the clutches of their education policy and their political misinformation. This was the only way to negate their trading system. The time had come to awaken the Sikhs with a new resolve and to put in practice the decided course of action. In the prevailing conditions, such a change was of a dire need.

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KUKA MOVEMENT

SATGURU RAM SINGH tried to instill a new life among the Punjabis feeling that psychologically they were totally disheartened. He felt that only a man with high moral values and principles can sacrifice his life for the cause of the nation, society and the religion. Only such a person can be a protector of the poor.

Based on this criterion, he could find only two and a half Gursikhs among all the affluent and prominent Sikhs. They were the only Gursikhs who followed the theological code of rituals set by Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh. They were: Baba Jamiat Singh Kana Kaachha and Sardar Lahina Singh, Gharjakh both full Sikhs and Baba Jamiat Singh Gill, half Sikh. He was only half a Sikh as he was a money lender and used to take interest on it.

Satguru Ram Singh chose the same Baisakhi day on which Satguru Gobind Singh had raised the Khalsa, to instill a new spirit in the disgusted Sikh community. Satguru Gobind Singh had raised the Khalsa by giving *Amrit* to fight the Moghuls. Satguru Ram Singh launched the Kuka Movement to banish the British from India who had come from a far off country, across seven seas and ruled India.

On 12th April, 1857 on Baisakhi festival day in 1914 Bikrami year, the Satguru gave the *Khanda Bata Amrit* (baptized) to five trusted followers and hoisted the white tri-cornered flag as a symbol to put up a resolute fight for independence. The flag was the symbol of peace, cooperation, patriotism, swadeshi, non-cooperation with British rulers and non-violence. In the words of Dr. Fauza Singh:

“The unfurling of the flag and the establishment of a society called Sant Khalsa in 1857 were not merely steps to tone up social and religious life but also beginning of a political movement.”¹

(KUKA MOVEMENT)

The Kuka movement is also known by two other names: 'Sant Khalsa' and 'Namdhari'. Giani Gian Singh writes about this sect of Panth Khalsa:

He gave the correct name 'Namdhari'
to give a call loudly is known as *kuke*, the world over.²

(Sri Guru Panth Parkash)

The Satguru chose his five ardent disciples not from among the Kings and Maharajas or landlords but from among the common villagers. He felt that they were the people who had been the most oppressed and the sufferers. The need was to protect them. The five front ranking Sikh followers baptised by the Satguru were:

1. Kahn Singh Nihang, son of S. Natha Singh of village Vadda Chack, Malerkotla state. He was a Havildar in the Prince Naunihal Singh platoon under the command of Brigadier Major Maxon. The Satguru was also from the same platoon. They had established the spiritual link there itself. The Nihang deserted the army and came back to his village after the debacle of the Khalsa army in the war of Mudaki because of traitors. He came to Bhaini Sahib in 1856 after hearing about the fame of the Satguru and was bewitched.
2. Labh Singh was the son of Jeet Singh from Nawanshahar. He was a blind Sikh. He was adept at playing on the musical string instrument and recitation of Guru's verses. He went for baptism to Guru Balak Singh but he sent him to Satguru Ram Singh. He preached in Jalandhar and Amritsar districts.
3. Atma Singh was from village Aalo Muhar, district Sialkot. He was a learned person. He left his home in search of a spiritual teacher. After his search in Wazirabad, Lahore etc., he reached Bhaini Sahib and felt spiritually greatly enchanted listening to the holy words (*Naam*) of the Satguru.
4. Naina Singh belonged to Warianh, district Amritsar. He was the son of S. Samund Singh. He had heard about the Satguru

from the holy singer Labh Singh and headed for Bhaini Sahib. His life's ambition was fulfilled having a glimpse of the Satguru.

5. Sudh Singh was from village Durgapur in Jalandhar district. His father's name was Jagat Singh. He had served in the Fourth Irregular Cavalry regiment. He also became a beneficiary of the Satguru's blessings.

On the Baisakhi day, as the large congregation assembled for the blessings of the Satguru, *Asa di Var* was recited. The Satguru had a plan. The five Sikhs had their bath from head to toe, cleaned the holy double-edged sword and the holy bowl and prepared the holy water by putting pure water and sugar bubbles in the bowl. As per his directions, three verses from the works of the Tenth Guru, *Jup, Chaupai* (then he cut the head of the demon), ten verses (*Saravg Sudh Samuh*) were recited. He recited in full Guru Nanak's verse *Japuji Sahib* and Guru Amar Dass's verse *Anand*. First of all, the five Sikhs were given *Amrit*. *Amrit* was poured into their hair and eyes. They were baptized by administering *Khande-di-Pahul's* *Amrit*. Every time, the Sikh salutation *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh* ('Waheguru's Khalsa, Waheguru's Triumph') was recited in a loud voice. Those who prepared *Khande-di-Pahul (Amrit)* and served *Amrit* had tugged the holy light sharp-edged war axe to their loin cloth. They were the wearers of the five Ks i.e. *Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kirpan and Kachchehra*.

After they had their holy *Amrit*, the head of the Brahm Buta *Akhara* (arena), Brahm Sudh took *Amrit*. He was christened as Sahib Singh. The Satguru and his younger brother Budh Singh took the holy water (*Amrit*) brought from the Ganges which had its origin from the Gomukh. Thereafter, all those Sikhs present who wanted to be baptised as the holy Sikhs were given *Amrit* (holy water).

Satguru Ram Singh made it obligatory for the Kukas to always get up in the wee hours, go for the morning chores in open fields, have head to toe bath, sit with folded legs for worship and

recite *Chau Akhare*, a *Gurmantra* (the four worded verses). *Jup*, *Jaap* and recitation of *Chandi di Var* (recitation in praise of the eternal power) were part of this daily ritual. It became customary to recite '*Asa di Var*' collectively in a group. It was mandatory for everybody to recite Guru's verses even while working honestly throughout the day.

He made it a convention to recite daily from the *Adi Granth* and *Dasam Granth* (the holy book of the tenth Guru). He directed that all Holy Scriptures kept aside in the nichies and the almirahs, should be taken out, dusted and kept in the places of worship and recited daily. He forebode the Kukas from worshipping or following any mystic, deities, gods and goddesses, abodes of the goddesses, village deities and the worship places of religious heads. They were also forbidden to have faith in the worship of the dead and crematory and to pay obeisance and make wishes.

The Kukas were directed to take only pure holy food. He asked them to have bath from head to toe, prepare their own food or get it prepared by a person of purity and take it. He asked them not to take food from any person who did not observe rituals. He asked them to drink water drawn by them and to always carry a small bucket (*Garva*) and a rope with them for this purpose. This kept them alert and active and they never felt laziness.

The Satguru apart from giving *Naam* (the Divine word) to the Kukas and prescribed a special dress for them. Their straight turban, a straight long shirt, long underwear which was to be removed during the bath by taking off one leg side at a time and putting on the other and the lower wear having a spiralled tight fitting at the lower legs. A string of white woolen beads gave them a separate identity. The observance of the five Ks – uncut hair (*kesh*), comb (*kangha*), metallic bangle (*Kara*), long under wear (*Kachchehra*) and sword (*Kirpan*) was made compulsory for the Kukas. As keeping a long sword was prohibited by the British, the sword was kept with the hair comb. The Kukas were also asked to wear a light sharp battle axe.

As the purity in thinking was to be maintained, the food being taken would also have to be pure. The Kukas, therefore, were pure vegetarian. Meat, fish, egg were forbidden. The prayer was the only intoxicant for them in the name of drugs. Opium, hashish or poppy, drinks and other intoxicants were prohibited.

At the time of performing the sacred fire (*Havan*), they were asked to recite five verses from Sri Adi Gaanth Sahib and Sri Dasam Garanth Sahib (*Chaupai, Jup, Jaap, Chandi Charitar, Akal Ustati*). All Sikhs were required to go for the prayers after getting purified and sitting in a brave posture wearing the loin girdle with the sharp-edged light war axe tugged to it. Only the holy material, ghee, sandalwood, jujube tree wood or butea frondosa tree wood were to be used for lighting the sacred fire (*Havan*). A dry coconut wrapped in a washed cotton cloth was to be kept for the prayer at the holy fire. Blowing the sacred fire from mouth was prohibited. The place where holy fire was to be lit (*Havan*) was to be given a pure mud wash. Seven individuals used to recite five verses and pour water and *Havan Samagari* at the holy fire (*Havan*) and the tradition continues even today. Recitation of prayer for Chandi was part of the daily ritual.

The Kukas used to hold musical congregations playing on the small twin faced drums, ringing cymbals and hand held musical instruments.

This Sect appeared different but the customary routine was as preached by the tenth Sikh Guru. His target was to rid the country of the foreign rulers. Giani Gian Singh described:

Praying the Goddess Durga and reciting hymns
 Never tired of praying the Ultimate God
 Wearing beads and the Granth Sahib
 They were all the Sikhs of the tenth Guru
 They did not have the lust for power
 Says Gian Singh that these were the type of people
 Who were famous as Sikh Kukas.³

(Sri Guru Panth Parkash)

Swadeshi and Non-cooperation:

The Kukas were directed to wear only the made in the country (Swadeshi) clothes and boycott foreign goods. They used coarse cotton or woolen clothes and not the clothes made in Manchester mills. The sale of British goods was on the increase in Indian markets. An indifference towards the British goods promoted the sale of home made goods which would eventually provide work to the Indian labour. Rajni Pam Dutt writes about the ups and downs in the sale of British goods:

‘The use of British cloth increased from ten lakh yards to five crore ten lakh yards between 1814 and 1835. The consumption of Indian cotton cloth came down to 20 lakh six thousand rolls of clothe from 77 lakh fifty thousand rolls.’⁴

(Aaj Ka Bharat)

The Satguru had ordained the Kukas not to indulge in any kind of quarrel among them. In case someone picked up a quarrel because of his stubborn nature, it should be decided in the peoples’ court itself. This way the people could save themselves from the injustice being perpetrated by the British courts, the huge expenses and wastage of time. In the words of Dr. Jaswant Singh Jass:

‘The Namdharis totally boycotted the British law and the British courts in accordance with the principle of non-cooperation. Baba Ram Singh ji propagated the old Indian tradition of deciding the quarrels with mutual consent while founding the Kuka movement.’⁵

(Baba Ram Singh Namdhari)

The British education system drove the people away from the Indian literature, culture and religion. For this reason, the Kukas boycotted it. Dr. Roshan Lal Ahuja writes about the education system:

‘Another major reason for the downfall of the home education system was the spread of the missionary schools. The *Pathshalas* (country schools) were no match to them. Their headmasters were

the white skinned scholars, their schools had elegant buildings, their education smacked of authority and they had the money power. The Eastern moon became insipid in front of the Western sun.'

The Presbyterian Mission set up centres in Ambala (1848), Lahore (1849) and Rawalpindi (1865). The Church Mission set up its bases at Amritsar (1852), Kangra (1854) and Multan and Peshawar (1855). In two years, they set up five bases, appointed 24 preachers and opened three lower schools upto 8th level and nine schools for Urdu education. In these schools, 488 students were on the rolls. They also opened two boarding schools, 35 girls schools and 27 schools which opened only on Sundays. 3007 students were on the rolls in these schools.⁶

(Punjab)

The Satguru ordained his followers not to send their children to British schools and instead teach them Gurmukhi when they were grown up and were at acquiring the learning age.

The Kukas were forbidden from entering government jobs. In case they joined the Government service, they (the Indians) would have become part of the same machinery which crushed their independence. They would have been filled with the subservient feelings and resigned themselves to slavery. This would have been the beginning of the British dominance.

The Satguru set up a personal postal arrangement for the Kukas. In those days all relatives used to live in close proximity to each other. The postal system was needed to manage the organizational affairs. The carriers carried the messages with responsibility, secretly, with speed and deliver them to the right person. The messengers used to follow the route from village to village, instead of going by the highways. Whosoever was put on the messenger duty, he used to complete this work of the organization with great enthusiasm, leaving aside all his personal works. If need be, the return post was also delivered through these messengers.

Non-cooperation was a political weapon. A mention about

it is made in the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

‘The first Indian to use non-cooperation and boycott of British merchandise and services as a political weapon was Satguru Ram Singh’.⁷

The Indian social structure was on a downfall because of illiteracy, ignorance, superstitions, economic and caste differences and contempt for the women. He encouraged education and forbade the idol, grave and the stone worship and blind faith. He showed them the path to live in peace and harmony leaving aside the caste and riches differences HH

He ordained them to give due respect to women, who were oppressed for centuries. He strictly forbade the killing of new born girl child and selling and barter of women folk. He organized the Kukas to stop taking dowry and to favour widow re-marriage. He put an end to child marriage. He ordained in one of his commandments: ‘Nobody should sell the women folk or barter them. This message should be carried to all that they should not marry their daughters before the age of fifteen or sixteen years. In the words of Kapur Singh, ICS:

‘Even if we keep aside the services he rendered to the nation and the people, he made his place among top reformers in the world with just one of his teachings that the male and female have equal rights in the society.’⁸

(Saptshring)

The Satguru persuaded the Kukas to imbibe moral values. He wanted them to be model human beings so that they could lead the society and the country and acquire high moral values. They should respect other women folk as their own daughters and sisters. They should not be adulterers, should never indulge in stealing, robbery or treachery, should never take interest on money lent to others, they should be content with their pious earnings and in case they chance upon someone’s lost thing, they should not keep it with them. They should keep themselves away from any kind of greed, infatuation, arrogance and anger. They should even forgive the

person who beats them. They should lead a pious life and follow Guru's rituals. They should be revolutionary in their thinking.

In the words of M.M. Ahluwalia:

'He (Satguru Ram Singh) understood that the battle for freedom which was not a lesser part of his religion, could hardly be won without a social and moral purge. This is why he began preaching truth and righteousness.'⁹

(Kuka Movement)

He launched the Kuka movement from villages. Majority of country's population lived in villages. The villagers were simple, honest and amiable. They were men of principles. They needed social and political awakening. They needed to have faith but not blind faith. The Kuka movement assimilated them into it so that they could recognize their personal values. They, on their own, became a part of Satguru Ram Singh's traditional religious rituals, political awakening, social revolution and cultural values and became a model for others.

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THE SPREAD OF KUKA MOVEMENT

ON THE BAISAKHI festival day in 1857, at Sri Bhaini Sahib, flag was hoisted, the Sikhs were given *Naam* and *Amrit* (baptized) and the fragrance of the holy water (*Amrit*) and religious hymns spread far and wide. Those who wanted to be initiated into the Movement flocked to Bhaini Sahib and turned into the best from nothing. Others followed suit. They felt the Guru had turned them into the pious ones from the devilish souls. They purified their lives and became capable of doing something good for the country, their race and the society. Bhaini Sahib became a religious place for not only the commoners but also for the affluent and the religious persons who felt that something was lacking in them.

S. Mangal Singh was a rich farmer from Bishanpura village. He owned a big fiefdom. He was a near relative of Maharaja Patiala. He visited Bhaini Sahib and turned into a Kuka after listening to the discourse of the Satguru. He had a stubborn white coloured mare (named as *Chini Ghor*). He presented this mare to the Satguru. When the Satguru sat into its saddle, the mare remained calm. He always used to ride this mare. His followers started calling him 'the Monarch with the white (*Chini*) mare.'

Baba Jawahar Singh was a religious head from the Nirmala sect. He used to wear saffron coloured dress. He held the oval shaped begging bowl in one hand and a string of beads in the other. He belonged to Lopo Badhani. On reaching Bhaini Sahib, he was so impressed by the Guru's humility that he became a Kuka. Bhup Singh of Madihar village in Ferozepur district was a scholar knowing Hindi, Punjabi, Braj and Sanskrit languages. He understood the ancient compositions very well and explained these to others also. He became a famous Kuka assuming the name of Bhai Rai Singh. He was adept at understanding and explaining the Sri Adi Garanth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib (sacred compositions of the

Tenth Guru). As directed by the Satguru, he went to Hazur Sahib, Nanded for receiving knowledge about the rituals practised by the Tenth Guru. He left an imprint of his learning, his sweet tongue, humility and contentment before returning to the Monarch with the white (*Chini*) mare.

People used to visit Bhaini Sahib in groups but used to go back draped in piety. They had their food from the community kitchen during their stay at Bhaini Sahib. The Satguru fixed a large round iron plate to bake loaves of bread. Initially, mother Jassan and Bibi Daya Kaur used to grind the flour for the community kitchen but later Sikh disciples expressed the desire that they will grind the flour, make the grains ready for grinding, kneed the flour and cook and serve food. The Satguru had begun the practice of such a community kitchen which served everybody all twenty four hours of the day without discrimination. The only condition was that none other than the pious people who followed rituals could serve in the community kitchen. This never ending practice of serving free food for all is continuing till today, even though more than 150 years have elapsed. The same type of round iron plate is being used even today to bake loaves of bread. The community food is traditionally cooked and served.

Among those who visited Bhaini Sahib was an old simple lady who had mastery over Hindu scriptures. If someone was asked what hymn (*Gurumantra*) had been given to him or her at the baptising ceremony, the immediate response was that it was a good one but was not allowed to be disclosed.

The publicity campaign for the spread of the Kuka movement began in 1858. Satguru Ram Singh led this campaign. He was full of magnetic divine powers. His first stop over was Muthada Kalan village in Jalandhar district. First of all Wazira blacksmith and later the entire village became his follower. The Satguru visited Jassowal, Jadoli, Aasi, Raipur, Lohgarh, Gujarwal, Narangwal, Rudka, Dehlon, Nawan Pind, Nangal, Pakhowal etc. villages in Ludhiana district.

Most of the residents of these villages became Kukas. All Sardars and landlords of Lohgarh village took a pride in being called a Kuka.

First of all, a decision was used to be taken to visit a particular village. Thereafter, a religious musical troupe visited the village and enthralled the people with their musical rendering of the rhymes to the accompaniment of beating of the small drums, playing on the hand held musical instruments and ringing cymbals. The people were drawn towards them and they used to shower heaps of praise on them. The Satguru used to be present at these gatherings. After the congregation if someone offered community meal, he was asked to become a Kuka and if that was acceptable to him, the congregation used to continue for a number of days.

The Satguru reached Amritsar in 1858 after visiting a number of villages in Doaba and Majha areas. While in Amritsar, he decided to visit Hazro to have a glimpse of Satguru Balak Singh. 25 Sikhs from among those accompanying him offered to go with him.

Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal described the visit to Hazro in the following words:

‘On hearing about the arrival of the twelfth Guru, the eleventh Guru came forward to greet him. Bhai Mukha accompanied Guru Balak Singh and Baba Kahn Singh Nihang accompanied Satguru Ram Singh. The Satguru was ceremonially greeted. They camped in the garden. The Satguru was profusely welcomed.’¹ (Satguru Bilas, Part I)

The Monarch with the white (*Chini*) mare, on insistence, visited each household alongwith his followers and had food with the inmates. He specially went to the house of Kishan Shah, had his food with him and blessed him.

The Satguru started the setting up of the religious musical troupes to propagate the Kuka sect. Three groups were made for hymn singers comprising a rebeck player, a performer on the peacock shaped string instrument and for the Tabla player. Hymn singers Prem Singh from Dhulete, Bhai Kirpal Singh, a scavenger who became a Sikh from Bhadaurh and Bhai Sahib Singh from

Bassian were sent to Malwa region for holding sessions of hymn singing. Bhai Tara and Tala Pathli went to Majha region for hymn sessions. Bhai Suba Singh from Moron village and his companion were allowed to go to Doaba region for hymn sessions. Bhai Pishora and Bhai Santu's troupe went round the country singing ballads inspiring the people for patriotism and admitting them into the Kuka sect. Bhai Khazan Singh, Rattan Singh, Harnam Singh, Sujan Singh and Bhai Attar Singh organized hymn singing sessions in and around Bhaini Sahib bringing more and more people to the Kuka sect. Devotees were urged to make only the fixed one rupee offering to hymn singers. They were highly contented and pleased with that much offering.

By 1860, Satguru's movement became fully operational. The all time free kitchen at Bhaini Sahib became the source for feeding every needy person. His shop was not being run for a large profit but largely as a help to the needy with very little profit. It appeared as if Guru Nanak Dev ji had opened the doors of the provision store for everybody. In the face of the prevailing famine, the prices were shooting up. Santokh Singh Bahawal writes about the increase in food grains prices and the help rendered to the Kukas and the non Kukas by the Satguru:

‘The foodgrains were purchased in *Chande* (1914 Bikrami – 1857) and thereafter there was a shortage of the commodities. In *Satara* (1917 Bikrami) faced a famine. The food grains which were being sold at two maunds (one maund is 40 seers or about 37 kiloograms) a rupee in Satara were earlier priced at 30 seers a rupee. The food grains were stored in the store house. These were sold two seers more than the market rate to a rupee. Besides, all those who came to purchase food grains were given free food. Many people used to visit the shop. None went without food grains. The poor showered blessings after being fed to their fill. People were wondering who could act like that – offer two seer more food grains per rupee than the market rate and also give food to eat.²

The prices were on the increase for nothing. The reason behind it was the 1857 First War of India's Independence which has been described as a rebellion by many British historians, including Kaye Malleon, Travelyan Lawrence and T.R. Hoemes and following in their footsteps many contemporary historians Munshi Jeewan Lal, Moinuddin, Durgadas Bandopadhyaya, Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, etc. also described it as a rebellion, based on eye witness accounts. This war began on 10th May. If seen in the historical perspective, it becomes clear that the seeds for India's War of Independence were sown by Satguru Ram Singh when he founded the Kuka movement and hoisted the flag at Bhaini Sahib on 12th April, 1857.

The 1857 rebellion (war) was fully planned by the armed units and native feudal states and was to begin on the 31st May, 1857 but it began earlier.

The Hindus and Muslim sepoys of the British regiment were fully convinced that pig's or cow's tallow was used in the bullets which needed to be opened with teeth. This was deliberately done to hurt the religious feelings of the Indians. Although the British officers denied the presence of cow or pig tallow but after a careful analysis, V.A. Smith proved that "the fat of cows and oxen really had been used at Woolwich arsenal."³

The spark ignited on the 29th March, 1857 when sepoy Pandit Mangal Pandey refused to use the greased bullet in Barrackpore cantonment (Bengal) and shot dead the Adjutant. The Indian army revolted. Mangal Pandey was arrested by the Britishers and hanged till death on 8th May, 1857. This fuelled the ire of the army men. The news spread like a wild fire and triggered a revolt in Meerut. Several British officers and British citizens were killed. The sepoys marched towards Delhi. On 12th May, 1857 Delhi was captured and Bahadur Shah Zafar declared the king of India. Delhi residents killed many Europeans.

Soon, the war spread to Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur, Bareilly, Varanasi, parts of Bihar, Jhansi and other places like a tornado.

Unfortunately, some chieftains, kings and sardars of some princely states gave the proof of their loyalty to the crown by siding with the Britishers in suppressing the revolt. The Deccan and Narbada area remained comparatively calm.

The fact was that the British were itching in line with the policy of Lord Dalhousie to conquer more territories. They conquered Punjab, Pegu (Burma) and Sikkim and put these under their control. Sitara, Jaitpur, Sambhalpur, Baghaat, Udaipur, Jhansi, Oudh and Nagpur were usurped treacherously. The title of Nawab of Karnataka and Tanjore were withdrawn and the pension of the heir of Peshwa Baji Rao II stopped. The very existence of the Indian Princely states was threatened. Sir Charles Napier writes: "If I were emperor of India for twelve months, no Indian Prince would exist."

There were economic as well as religious reasons for the revolt of 1857. The sepoys were disgruntled but despite the zeal of nationalism, the Nawabs and Kings and even the Queen of Jhansi were defeated with their large armies. The reason was that some princely states, including that of Patiala, Jind, Nabha, Gwalior, Hyderabad etc. sided with the Britishers. Lord Canning writes: "If the Scindia joins the mutiny, I shall have to pack off tomorrow." Punjab had only very recently come under the British bondage, but the faithful Punjabis, especially the Sikhs, sided with the Britishers. The kings of three Punjabi princely states led their forces in person. According to historian Sunder Lal: "There were three states of Punjab Patiala, Nabha and Jind in between Ambala and Delhi and if these three states had at that time sided with the fighters for country's freedom, there was no doubt that it would have been totally impossible for the British to recapture Delhi and they would have been uprooted for ever from the Indian soil."⁴

(British Rule in India)

The Commander-in-Chief of the British army General Wilson admitted that during the 1857 adversity not only the 35,000 strong Punjab army helped them but also lent four lakh rupees to the government..

The Sikhs were disgraced with the blot to force the continued occupation of India by the Britishers. They put down the armed revolt with military power and re-established their rule by December, 1858. When East India Company handed over the direct rule of the Indian territory to the British Queen, Satguru Ram Singh's efforts to keep the Kuka movement active were no less important. Giani Gian Singh writes as follows about the visits undertaken by the Satguru till 1860 to strengthen the organization and to make his followers ardent Sikhs who did not indulge in any type of vices and to bring in a change in their attitude:

On receiving this special order of the God
 The true believer in God gave this message
 Stop smoking and keep uncut hair
 Fortune smiled on those who turned Sikhs
 Their fame spread far and wide
 and large numbers turned Sikhs
 The Sikh sect spread as they got the *Naam*
 Opium, hashish, poppy, drinks, meat eating, stealing
 Cheating, etc. were discarded
 leading to the age of virtuous.⁵

(Sri Guru Panth Parkash)

In 1861, the Satguru made preparations to participate in the half Kumbh (Hindu festival of bathing in the sacred Ganges) on the Baisakhi festival day. He was accompanied by Baba Kahn Singh Nihang, Sahib Singh, Sudh Singh and *Vedanti* (preacher) Sahib Kaur with her armed carried toddler son Lal Singh. Among his family members father Jassa Singh, brother Budh Singh, uncle Natha Singh and both daughters accompanied him. In the accompanying troupe were the hymn singers and musicians Sudh Singh, Labh Singh and Dittoo. Stopping on the way for rest, they crossed Lallan, Utalan, Khanna and Jagadhri. The group reached Haridwar via Saharanpur after crossing the river Ganges and the Yamuna. The group became bigger in size with more and more people joining on the way and converting themselves into the Kuka sect. The Satguru stopped about a mile short of distance from Bhim Goda.

At Haridwar, the people belonging to the Nirmala sect had organized the recitations from Sri Adi Garanth Sahib but the place was too filthy because of a nearby heap of refuse. The Satguru himself cleaned the place and gave it a mud wash. He also taught them the rituals to honour the recitation of religious hymns.

A group had come to Haridwar from Hazro also. They were pleased to meet each other and greeted by bowing to the feet.

The Satguru happened to see head of the Ramraiyan hermitage. He was wearing a costly well designed silken long robe. His hair fell to the neck and looked like a beehive. He had put a dot on his forehead, a silken lower and blackened his eyes with antimony. The Satguru told him "It is the dress of a male dancer. Be an ideal saint and maintain purity of food and dress."

The truthful traditional Naga hermits believers in *Sanatan dharma* visited the Satguru's abode. The Satguru revered them greatly and offered them food before they departed.

On his way back, the Satguru paid obeisance at Gurudwara Manji Sahib at Ambala and recited the hymns to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The group reached Khanna after a stopover at Barha. The Satguru invited Mai Jassan there. She came wearing a necklace having a platform embedded with pictures of goddesses. The Satguru threw away this platform and said, 'they will stand you nowhere.' On reaching Bhaini Sahib, the Kukas took rest.

The Satguru set up publicity centres for the Kukas at all major places including Muthada, Dhuleta, Siarh, Khote etc. The Sikhs often requested him to visit their villages.

The Kukas were inspired to organize religious recitations at more and more places. The Satguru decided to celebrate the Maghi festival at Mukatsar. He reached Faridkot visiting on the way Malot, Dialpur and Baghaur. A large number of devotees wanted to take *Amrit* (holy consecration) at the largely attended congregation. The King of Faridkot showed his loyalty to the Britishers. He sent a barber to spy on the Kukas and to report on what they did and said. He joined the gathering adorning Namdhari

dress. He used to steal the clothes of the Sikhs. Baba Roor Singh Rakharh thought of a plan. He tied four anna (twenty five paise) coins to the corners of his bed sheet. The barber was caught red handed while stealing the bed sheet. He was presented before the congregation and was interrogated. He was ostracized. He went to the King of Faridkot and pleaded that if the publicity campaign of the Kukas was not stopped, all people will adopt the Kuka sect. It will be a potential danger to the kingdom. The King fined the headman of Bajakhana to pay five hundred rupees for punishing the barber by the village. The Sikhs felt bad about it. The Satguru organized a mock fight for the Sikhs, copying the army men with sticks, long bamboo sticks, *salotar* (clubs) and *safajung* (battle axes) at Tibbi Sahib. The Ferozepur district police Superintendent came on a horse back ordering that the mock fight and the parade be stopped. Nobody paid any heed to his warning. Instead one Sikh hit his mare with a club. He left the place fearing a flare up. The Satguru and the Kukas paid their obeisance at the historic gurudwaras but the priests were not happy with him and were jealous of the large number of people accompanying him as his companions.

The Satguru kept serving sacred water (*Amrit*) and consecrating the people. He visited Jagraon, Roomi, Chhajawal and Gujarwal villages before returning to Bhaini Sahib.

The Kuka Sikhs celebrated the Diwali festival in 1862 at Amritsar under the aegis of the Satguru. He visited Doaba area and gave wide publicity to the Kuka sect. The entire village of Muthada, Dhuleta, Rurhka, Dhurkot and Chak joined the Kuka movement. The Jat Sikh farmers and all those engaged in menial jobs used to get up in the wee hours, have their bath and recite the holy hymns. The sect was spreading to nearby villages also.

The Satguru showered his blessings and visited Doaba area also. He reached Amritsar after several stopovers. It was a common saying in the area that 'a new Guru has appeared.' The people who came for a glimpse of the Guru, used to join the sect and add to the number of his followers. But the heads of various

hermitages and the priests felt jealous of the Satguru's praise. The Akal Bunga priests were also nurturing similar jealousy towards the Satguru. In fact, the people had started turning away from the priests. They stopped visiting them for paying them respects leading to reduction in their income. The reason was that they started having faith in the Satguru and the Sikhs.

The Satguru visited villages in Majha area also. He preached the people in villages Guru ka Bagh, Sahinsra, Bhodewali, Gill, Fatehwal, Granth Garh etc. with more and more people changing their attitude towards life.

Satguru Ram Singh along with Baba Jamiat Singh Gill and other Sikhs set on the journey to visit Satguru Balak Singh. They had hardly reached the banks of river Jhanah when they got the news that the Satguru breathed his last on 8th December, 1862 (Puranmashi day in Maghar month in 1919 Bikrmi). He left for heavenly abode in the afternoon. When he fell sick, the Unani physicians were called but no medicine could give him relief and finally, the end came on a Saturday.

Satguru Ram Singh did not feel like proceeding on to Hazro. He went on a visit for religious discourses to Shahbazpur, Wazirabad, Sialkot, Naushaihra etc. and attracted the people towards the rituals followed by the Sikhs. Under his influence, Sikhs from several villages, including Gujarwal, Filoki, Varan, Virk, Murad Fort etc. became Namdharis. Some villagers from these villages used to steal the animals. They used to quarrel and indulge in stealing. The Satguru made them leave all vices and converted them as his religious followers.

In December, 1862, the Satguru visited Muthada. There he got the news of the death of Satguru Balak Singh. The Satguru returned to Bhaini Sahib Gurudwara and started preparing to go to Hazro. He began his journey towards Hazro accompanied by about Fifty Sikhs. He reached Amritsar visiting on the way Ludhiana, Phillaur, Muthada and the river banks at Dhilwan. He crossed the river banks at Kakkarh and took rest at Gill reaching there via Wazirabad.

When he crossed the river Jhanah in a boat, he met Bhai Manna Singh who was in another boat coming from the opposite direction carrying the ashes of Satguru Balak Singh. The Satguru met the group there itself and set on the return journey. He stayed for the night with Baba Jamiat Singh at Gill. He visited Shekhupura and Sialkot. After that, he gave *Naam* (consecrated) thousands of Sikhs and female Sikhs at Pasrur, Ugochak, Wazirabad, Mannanwala, etc.

The Deputy Commissionerr of Sialkot Macnabb reported to his senior officers on the 15th April, 1863:

“.....An elderly Sikh of Ludhiana, calling himself Bhai was going across the country with 200 men whom he trains at night with sticks instead of muskets and he boasts of having 5,000 followers and obeyed no *Hakim* (ruler).”⁶

The higher authorities were forced to think that if there are 5,000 Kuka Sikhs in Sialkot district alone, there would be many more at other places also. They called for secret reports from other districts also and ordered a strict watch on the activities of the Satguru.

The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar Major Mercer wrote that he had the company of the bamboo sticks wearing strong youth:

“As no seditious language had been used and he (Satguru) seemed peaceably disposed, it was considered unadvisable to interfere with him when the fair was at its peak.”⁷

Satguru Balak Singh had his influence in Attock district. The Assistant District Superintendent of Police Mr. Green wrote to Inspector General of Police, Mari in Punjab that a Sikh (Guru) Balak Singh, caste Arora had started a new sect of the Sikhs at Hazro in Rawalpindi district, which is *jagiasi* (inquisitive) and *abhiasi* (meditative). Amongst his more favourite disciples were: 1. Kahn Singh, who now is the head of the sect at Hazro, 2. Lal Singh, now a resident of Amritsar and 3. (Guru) Ram Singh, for some years past resident of village Bhaini in Ludhiana and the subject of these notes. On the death of their founder which occurred

six months ago the members of the sect appear to have unanimously elected Ram Singh as his successor.”⁸

He was not aware that Satguru Balak Singh had himself enthroned Satguru Ram Singh as heir to the Guru's seat in 1841 and Satguru Ram Singh had founded the Namdhari sect on 12th April, 1857. Green had written on the basis of hearsay, without verification but he admitted that the rightful heir to the Guru's seat after Satguru Balak Singh was Satguru Ram Singh.

By that time, the Kuka movement had become an eye sore for the British government. It started collecting secret reports about it. These reports were collected from Attock, Sialkot and Amritsar districts as also from the districts of Ferozepur, Jalandhar and Lahore. Everybody in his efforts to please higher authorities, gave exaggerated reports and cautioned to be on the maximum alert on this count. These reports could not implicate the Satguru in any political controversy but his influence over the people became an eye sore for them.

The heads appointed by the Satguru, religious preachers, hymns singers all preached against superstition and asked the people not to worship the dead and should destroy any memorial raised for them in the cremation ground. They also preached fearlessly to follow the rituals and have faith in the Guru.

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RAISED THE HONOUR OF WOMEN

A WOMAN WITHOUT a man and a man without a woman is just incomplete. The coming into being of this world cannot even be imagined without their harmony. Still the woman had always been deprived of her due honour in the society. Manusmriti states:

“The gods shower their blessings over the household or the dynasty which honour their women folk.”¹

Ved Vyas says: “A woman is the daughter of nature. Nobody should cast his evil eyes on her.”

Guru Nanak Dev proclaims in his hymns:

“Why call her bad, who gave birth to the Kings.”²

She is the creator of the male but still she is a deprived lot. When Satguru Ram Singh founded the Kuka movement, the women had no identity of their own. Her birth was considered a bad omen. Even a woman did not have any sympathy or love for another woman. What to say, in comparison to the Sikhs, their women folk in their households did not follow any set rituals. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh had raised the *Khalsa Panth* by giving them *Amrit* (consecrating) the Sikhs. He made them wear five Ks. The ladies did not wear even underwear. Satguru Ram Singh initiated giving them *Amrit* (consecrate them) for the first time in 1863.

During his sojourns, the Satguru reached Siarh along with his Sikh followers, the Area Chiefs and the hymn singers. The Sikhs put down their faces on seeing the women bathing naked at a pond and felt lack of modesty on their part. Suba (Divisional Governor) Lakha Singh requested the Satguru to preach them also for a modest behaviour. The Sikhs observing the principles of piety and purity used to cook their own food. The women did not observe sacred rituals and for this reason, the Sikhs did not take food prepared by them. They requested that the women should also be inspired to follow Sikh rituals.

The Satguru was on the look out for an opportune time. In his presence, the recitation of the morning hymns (*Asa di Var*) was arranged at the residence of Sant Bela Singh in Siarh village on Monday, the 1st June, 1863 (Puranmasi day in Jeth month in 1920 Bikrmi). The Sikhs prepared the bowl full of Amrit (*Khande-di-Pahul*), consecrated with the double edged sword. The Satguru ordained that women folk should observe customary practice of wearing five Ks, take religiously *Amrit (Khande-di-Pahul)* and observe purity of thought and action. About 25 women came forward. They included Satguru's mother Jassan also.

The women took *Amrit* (consecrated food), put on long underwear and the shirt instead of the petticoat. In their homes, they had leather buckets to draw water from the well. They had the menials to fetch water from the well but they were all removed. They began hymn singing and prayers and preferred to fetch water from the well themselves. Better amity and brotherhood prevailed among the families.

Joga Singh Dhoorhkotia mentioned to the Satguru about the marriage of his daughter. The Satguru said 'it will be performed very soon'. The Satguru had made up his mind to begin the practice of performing marriages according to the Sikh faith from Amritsar on the Baisakhi day. He was on the look out for the place and timing to perform the ceremony.

Joga Singh from village Dhoorhkot requested the Satguru that he wishes to perform the marriage ceremony of his children in his presence as it was for the first time that marriages were to be performed according to Sikh rites. Joga Singh wanted that his village should take the pride of being the first for this historic change. There was only one house of the Kuka Sikhs in Dhoorhkot village. Therefore, the Satguru selected the nearby Khote village in Ferozepur district for this revolutionary step. People were asked to reach the Khote village by the afternoon of 2nd June.

The Satguru knew well that reforms in the rituals and religious rites were not an easy task. All people do not welcome these. Many traditionalists and those having a self interest could oppose the move. They could even take some discomfoting steps. There

could be a move to remain vigilant against it and even the use of force to stop it.

The solemnizing of marriages was a profession for many people. The parents of the boy or the girl were only the mute spectators. The pandits considered performance of the marriage ceremony as their right. They used to fix the date of marriage in accordance with the horoscope and perform the marriage ceremony. The barber was supreme in fixing the marriages. He could fix the marriage anywhere, whether suitable or not. They used to cook food for the marriage party and other guests. *Panch* or the water carriers (*jhiur*) used to serve water. The carpenter will make the bed and other furniture items for the dowry. There used to be other menials also. The pandit used to decide about the dowry, gifts, charity and the process for the rituals. There used to be extravagance and expenses beyond one's capacity for a self pride. Dowry was a compulsion for a self pride. No one could even think of inter caste marriages. No one was beyond these restrictions. The participation in a marriage of the barber, tailor, water carrier and carpenter was as village menials. The professional clowns, mimic actors, fire works players and musical instruments and drum players had their own place in these celebrations. The marriage party used to be restricted from eating food served to it and only after a ritual it was allowed to eat. The ladies from the bride's side would sing abusive songs and cut vulgar jokes addressing the bridegroom's relatives. The people used to come under heavy debt. Even all marriages of the Gurus up to the marriage of Satguru Ram Singh were performed according to the Vedic rituals by the pandits.

The Satguru reached Dhoorhkot and thereafter proceeded to Khote village on 2nd June, 1863. The community kitchen and recitation of hymns was already on. The commoners only knew that a new type of ritual for performing the marriages will begin from the next day. They were eager to see it. On 3rd June, 1863 the spectators interested mainly in amusement and people from nearby villages reached Khote village from the early morning.

In order to obey the Satguru's dictum, the recitation of

morning hymns began in the early hours in a loud voice. The revered Satguru was adorning his coveted seat. A large number of devotees took their seats after paying their obeisance to the Guru. At the break of dawn, seven holy Sikhs lit the holy fire (*performed Havan*) at the altar of dawn. Recitation of *Jap, Jap Chaupai, Chandi Charitra and Akal Ustati* continued at the holy fire. The five holy consecrated Sikhs recited five sacred utterances *Jap, Jap Chaupai, Sawaiye and Anand* (marriage hymns). Thereafter, they served *Khande-di-Pahul* to the newly wed couples assembled there after having a bath and a hair wash, wearing the five Ks. The couples took four rounds of the holy fire amidst recitation of four stanzas of the sacred text of Guru Ram Das's poetry enshrined in the *Adi Granth Sahib*. The ritual was over which came to be known later as *Anand* tradition (*Anand Karj*).

The *Anand* Sahib was recited. The prayer was offered. Consecrated food was served. The holy bondage of the couples was untied. They bowed before the Satguru and went back to their seats alongwith their relatives. On that day six couples were married at a single altar. The reference about them is now part of the history.

This was the very first important event of collective inter caste marriage ceremony in accordance with Sikh rites without dowry. Noted Sikh historian Giani Gian Singh writes:

In the presence of Sri Guru Ram Singh Kuka
the marriage was performed amidst chanting of hymns.
On seeing this, a large number of Sikhs
followed the *Anand Karj* for performing marriages.³

(Bhupindra Nand)

Noted writer S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok writes:

“The most important characteristic of the ceremony was that the Namdharis performed their marriages in a simple way without spending much on them. They took pure simple food and kept themselves away from meat or drinks. Based on this tradition, the Sikh Anand Marriage Tradition Act (*Anand Karj*) was passed on 22nd October, 1909.”⁴

(Punjab Dian Leharan)

The Sikhs were grateful to the Satguru for setting this tradition but the pandits were restive fearing that if this tradition comes into vogue, it would be a death knell for them. They dared that if such a thing happens, the Sikhs will be guilty of killing the God's creation. When they mounted a major offensive, the Satguru opined, "They should be killed by throwing into the holy fire." They were terrorized but did not remain silent. In the words of Sant Santokh Singh:

"The pandits from Khote village appealed to the government. They collectively protested that the new sect is a death knell for them as it has stopped the Vedic rituals. They used to call us for the performance of rituals at their marriage ceremonies, which they have now stopped. They do not believe in the caste system and perform their marriages with non Sikhs also. They are vitiating the atmosphere in the entire country."⁵

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

This was another milestone in the welfare of women by Satguru Ram Singh ji. For this very reason, the birth of a female child in Namdhari Sikh families is not considered a curse. Child marriage is prohibited among them and they also do not marry their daughters in exchange for the marriage of their son. The women folk are not a trading commodity among these families. In the Namdhari Sikh families, the women observe a pure simple life and recite from the scriptures and chant hymns. They are grateful to the God and the Satguru.

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SATGURU'S HOUSE ARREST

ON 4TH JUNE, 1863, the chowkidar of Khote village lodged a complaint in the Bagha Purana police station that Kukas had gathered in his village for the last three days. Satguru Ram Singh is their head. They are indulging in propaganda against the British government.

The Government was already in receipt of reports from different districts about the upsurge of the Kuka movement. A police officer immediately reached Khote village for an enquiry. He confirmed the report submitted by the chowkidar following a detailed enquiry. He further stated that many women also took part in their activities. On 6th June, Superintendent of Police reached Khote village. He recorded the statements of village heads from nearby villages and reported that the Kukas were in a rebellious mood. The acting Deputy Commissioner concluded that the Satguru should be dissuaded from visiting any place in the district and the Kuka's should not be allowed to hold any religious congregation. This was put into practice. The Satguru was taken to Bhaini Sahib under police vigilance.

The convention of holding simple marriage according to Sikh rites which began as a purely social reform was reported as a political movement. The recitation of the compositions of the Guru and chanting of hymns was taken as propaganda for a rebellion.

The District Superintendent sent a report to the acting Inspector General of Police, Punjab based on the information collected on 7th June, 1863. It was mentioned in the report that the Kukas were behaving in an unusual way. They were in a rebellious mood very soon they would have 1,25,000 strong army. They say they will charge only one fifth as tax.

After the house arrest of the Satguru and other prominent Sikhs in Bhaini Sahib, Major J. W. Younhusband sent a secret letter to the Deputy Inspector General of Police of greater Punjab in his capacity as Inspector General Police, Lahore on 3rd July, 1863 to keep a strict watch on Guru Ram Singh and his Kuka movement. He also asked the District Superintendents of Police to send reports on any kind of information about them. It was but natural that these reports were sent outside Punjab to India's Viceroy.

The government was terrified. Not much time had elapsed since the 1857 revolt. Punjab was heavily crushed. The Kings, Nawabs, Chieftains and Landlords of more than 600 princely states in India were already under the British rule and indulged in its flattery. They behaved ruthlessly towards the general public. What to talk of the ordinary village heads, even the intelligentsia had become subservient to the British. But what they feared was that an ordinary person, the son of a menial carpenter belonging to a backward class and coming from a remote earthen village was vitiating the atmosphere. The reports said that village after village was turning his followers. The government was terrified as his Kuka movement was becoming a major potential danger for it. To the Britishers, the aim of the Kukas was apparently not only social reforms and to lead a pure simple life but they appeared to have an eye on much bigger stakes. The faithful Kukas, under the orders of their leader could uproot the British rule in India.

On the other hand, there were more loyal officers and servants than the government itself. There was another class of 'loyal' and it appeared this class was in greater haste than their masters even.

On 6th June, 1863 the Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar Captain Alphinstone sent a report which mainly said:

"He abolishes all distinctions of caste among Sikhs; advocates indiscriminate inter marriage of all classes, enjoins the marriage of widows all of which he performs himself; he never takes alms himself and prohibits his followers from doing so; enjoins abstinence from liquor and drugs, advocates much too free interaction between the sexes; men and women feel free at his meetings and thousands

of women and young girls have joined his sect; he exhorts his disciples to be neat and clean and speak the truth. One of his maxims says "It is well that everyone carries his stuff, and they all do so."¹

The Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar Captain Aliphinstone sent the information collected about the Satguru through his trustworthy sources to his senior officers. The same day, he wrote in one of his reports about one person, Mani Ram Pandit that he discarded the Kuka movement because of his (Satguru Ram Singh's) unprincipled values and rites and rituals. He had never seen the Kukas undergoing any physical drill. He admitted of the magnetic power of Satguru Ram Singh, which he said, was a God's gift to mobilise the Kukas. He had seen thousands of Sikhs becoming his blind followers. Even though he does not say a word about it in his discourses, he believes in the revival of the Sikh rule. He considers himself a messenger of God and delivers religious type of sermons."²

Jalandhar Cantonment Magistrate Captain Millar sent a different report. He based his report on the information given to him by one of his spies Genda Singh, who visited Bhaini Sahib on the 11th February, 1862. Genda Singh turned a Kuka after requesting Sahib Singh. During the night, he saw 50 other Kukas practising with swords to the tune of drums. He expressed a desire to see the Satguru. He was told about the Satguru's abode and given two letters for the purpose. Making a false pretext of losing the letters, he went to Jalandhar and handed over these letters to the Captain. The first letter said: "The triumph of Satguru Gobind Singh ji. My name is Ram Singh and I live in Bhaini Sahib. My house will be in Satluz-Yamuna region and I will propagate my own religion. I will defeat the Britishers and wear the crown. Winning war cry will reverberate everywhere. The musical troupes will recite war poetry in my praise in 1864. After one lakh twenty five thousand warriors join me, I shall behead the Britishers. The war will be fought on the banks of river Yamuna. There will be heavy bloodshed. I shall win. The British will run away leaving behind even their wives. By 1865, Khalsa will win and its rule will be established. The

second letter said: "Give me your whereabouts. I shall meet soon. I cannot stay away from you."³

It appeared this report was concocted, sitting at home. There is enough material in government records but not these two handwritten letters of Sahib Singh. Even the government of the day did not pay much credence to this concocted report. Otherwise, the report would have formed part of the government record.

The acting Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana Charles P. Elliot reported to Secretary Punjab on 6th July 1863 that he had called (Guru) Ram Singh to Ludhiana for interrogation. He is not a sycophant. His preaching is purely religious and virtuous and not political. He ordered that the Satguru can leave the village and can visit anywhere he likes, without permission. The Amritsar Deputy Commissioner also reported that he did not indulge in rebellious preaching. But still, the fears of the British government were not allayed and it continued his house arrest.

The Satguru issued the Code of Conduct for the baptized Sikhs to encourage observance of the theological rituals by the Sikhs. This gave a direction to the Sikhs and did not allow them to be demoralized. Instead it encouraged them. The Code was:

Code of Conduct for the Baptized Sikhs 12th Reincarnation The One True God Be Gracious

Written by Ram Singh. The entire Sikh community and the Sikh community of Bhaini to accept my greetings with the salutation in the Sikh traditions 'the God's Khalsa, the Ultimate God's triumph (*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Sri Waheguru ji ki Fateh*).' This Code of Conduct for the baptized Sikhs is written at Bhaini for the entire Sikh community. Get up in the wee hours, go for the morning chores carrying water for the purpose in a small metal pitcher (*Gadwa*). Clean the pitcher (*Gadwa*) twice. Take off your clothes before going for the morning chores. Thereafter, clean your teeth and have a bath. Recite the hymns. In case you do not remember these by heart, practice and remember these by heart. Everybody

should follow these chores, including the women folk. Repeat the hymns and prayers *Jap, Jaap, Hazare* of both and remember these by heart. The evening prayer and the ritual worship *Rehras Arti Sohila* with lighted traditional lamps must be remembered by heart and all should always feel contended. Pray the true God for all the twenty four hours a day. Consider others sisters and daughters as your own progeny. The Guru Ji has already ordained about others' rights. The violation of others' rights is like the violation of the sanctity of the cow by the one section and that of the pig by the other. If someone does not recite the hymn (*Guru Mantra*), even after receiving it on his request, he will suffer in this life and the next one. No one should speak ill of others. In case someone beats you, still you bear with it and pardon him. The God will protect you. Always try not to boast of your good points. Always offer prayers. Daily chant the hymns and recite from the scriptures. In case you want to feed the congregation by organizing a community kitchen, clean the place and rub it with mud solution for the purpose. Bring unused utensils and enter the kitchen only after washing your hands and feet. Light the sacred fire also but before that, clean the place. Use the sacred *Butea Frondosa* tree or *Jujube* tree wood for the sacred fire. Do not blow the sacred fire by mouth. Recite from the scriptures while offering the prayer at the sacred fire. Recite the four lined religious verses, rhymes and the verses in praise of God *Chaupai, Jap, Jaap, Chandi Charitra, Akal Ustati*. The sixth man should put religious fragrant ingredients into the sacred fire and the seventh man should sprinkle water in small quantities. If someone is found indulging in bad deeds or cheating or stealing, do not allow such a person in the religious congregation. In case he is too powerful, everybody should pray to the Almighty that he may not remain fit to enter the religious congregation. I have only a limited knowledge. You may ponder over all these points. Everybody should pray to God with folded hands that their religion may flourish. Always put on the underwear. Take off its one side only after putting on the other. Do not try to protect anybody by hiding his bad deeds. Do not sell your daughters or sisters. Do not marry in exchange for marriage of your son or

daughter. Always pray to the God. Convey this dictat to all followers that no one should marry his daughters before attaining the age of fifteen or sixteen years. Do not take meat or drinks. Always be fearful of the Guru.⁴-

-Namdhari Nitnem 2062 Bikrmi (2005)

The other major work completed by the Satguru was publication of the volumes of Sri Adi Granth Sahib. He entrusted this service to S. Buta Singh, the proprietor of the Aftab Press, Lahore. He published the volumes using stone printing. Earlier, these volumes were only hand written. These were also eaten away by rodents and termites while stacked in cupboards or small storing places in the walls. Giani Gian Singh has substantiated this fact. Illiterate Sikhs did not know how to recite hymns. Therefore, they had kept the scriptures in reverence, tied in the scarf. Satguru Ram Singh made them take out these volumes and whatsoever were in good condition were kept in the places of worship with due reverence. He ordained all Sikhs to read these scriptures. The volumes were in short supply and everybody was not able to enjoy reciting these. So the volumes published by S. Buta Singh came handy for them to read.

This helped the Sikhs who were not able to see the Satguru in person because of his house arrest satisfy their desire by reciting hymns. They felt morally all the more strong after reading the scriptures:

No King can be equated with God

This kingship is short lived, they indulge in wrong doings.⁵

(Kabir)

Therefore, do not be afraid of any cruel government and pray to God.

The third important event by the Satguru was the appointment of the Subas (Divisional Governors) of the Namdhari sect. He appointed five Subas. They were:

1. Suba Jawahar Singh, Bhai ki Darauli, district Amritsar. He left agriculture and joined the Sikh cavalry regiment. He was disappointed with the downfall of the Sikh rule and became a Nirmala monk. On being appointed the Suba, he started preaching in Ferozepur district. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 43.
2. Suba Kahn Singh. He was the resident of Wada Chak in Malerkotla state and was Havildar in Sikh regiment. He used to wear the robe of a Nihang Sikh. He went to Patiala for religious discourses. The first to come under his influence was the area concentrated by petty blacksmiths and nomadic tribes. They turned anti British. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 53.
3. Suba Sahib Singh. He was from Bangalipur in Amritsar district and was *Udasi Sadhu* (melancholy monk). He ran the postal system and public relations. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 32.
4. Suba Lakha Singh. He belonged to Malaud, district Ludhiana. He served the Sherdil regiment. He preached in Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar districts and looked after the arrangements at the Bhaini Sahib headquarters. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 32.
5. Suba Sudh Singh. He belonged to Samri, district Amritsar. He had urged Satguru Balak Singh for baptizing him. His areas of preaching were district Amritsar and Majha and Malwa areas. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 42.

When the government came to know about the preachings by the Subas, it put them under house arrest at Bhaini Sahib so that the movement may die its own death. But the Satguru had an alternative plan. Taking a cue from the appointment of these Subas, he appointed 17 more Subas. They were as follows. They had been chronologically placed in continuation of the five appointed earlier:

6. Suba Aroor Singh. He was the elder brother of Sahib Singh from Bangalipur, district Amritsar. He was a cavalier in the Army. He preached in district Amritsar. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 35.
7. Suba Man Singh. He belonged to Saidoki in Ferozepur district. He preached in his own district. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 44.
8. Suba Bhagwan Singh. He belonged to Fatohwal, district Amritsar and used to preach in his own district.
9. Suba Surmukh Singh. He belonged to Dhillon, Nabha State. His area of preaching was Nabha and Patiala. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 31.
10. Suba Giani Rattan Singh, Mandi Kalan, Sangrur State. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 28. He used to settle personal conflicts. He was the justice Suba.
11. Suba Raja Singh. He was from Tarandi, district Sialkot and preached in Sialkot and Gujranwala districts. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 30.
12. Suba Jamiat Singh. He belonged to Gill, district Sialkot and preached in his home district. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 50.
13. Suba Brahma Singh. He was from Dariapur, district Karnal. Earlier he was the monk head of the *Udasi* (melancholy) monastery and later joined the army. He was totally disheartened at the defeat in the 1857 War of Independence and became a travelling monk. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 45. He preached in Jalandhar, Lahore, Gujranwala and Sialkot.
14. Suba Hukam Singh. He belonged to Pitho village in Nabha State. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 29. Earlier he was a Nirmala monk. He lived at Bhaini Sahib and used

to copy Sri Adi Granth Sahib. He preached in Ludhiana district and central Punjab.

15. Suba Maluk Singh. He was from Ablu village in Ferozepur district. He was appointed Suba at the age of 33 and preached in his native area.
16. Suba Narain Singh. He belonged to Katra Sharmi (Khatre), district Ludhiana. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 32. He preached about the Kuka movement in Mukatsar and Ferozepur districts. His preachings used to be anti British.
17. Suba Paharha Singh. He was born at Malaud. He was a Nirmala monk. The Satguru appointed him the Suba at the age of 42. He settled at Siarh (Ludhiana).
18. Suba Jota Singh. He was from Dhapai, district Sialkot. The Satguru appointed him as the Suba at the age of 35. He preached about the organization in Lahore, Gujranwala and Amritsar districts.
19. Suba Khushhal Singh. He belonged to Tharaj, district Hissar. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 50. He preached in Hissar, Nabha and Patiala.
20. Suba Samund Singh. He was from Khote, district Ferozepur (now Moga). His daughter and his son's daughter were married at Khote village on 3rd June, 1863. He preached about the organization in his home area.
21. Suba Khazan Singh. He was from Ladhana, district Jalandhar. He was appointed the Suba at the age of 35. He preached in Lahore and Amritsar areas.
22. Suba Gopal Singh. He belonged to Rakharh Marorh, Patiala State. He became the Suba at the age of 35. He managed the affairs of Gurudwara shop.

Almost all the Subas were young. They were all brave and full of enthusiasm. They had a great desire to work for the Kuka

movement. They were all good orators who attracted others towards them. In the words of Giani Gian Singh:

Like the Emperor Akbar, he appointed 22 Subas
They were all sweet tongued and good preachers.⁶

(Sri Guru Panth Prakash)

M.M. Ahluwalia writes:

“The Subas were not only his eyes and ears projected in the length and breadth of Punjab but also his spokesmen and representatives for a regular contact which was essential in such a movement..⁷

(Kukas)

These spokesmen became an eye sore for the British.

The Subas had varied experience. Someone was from a military background while the other was a travelling monk. Someone was the priest of Brahm Buta monastery while the other a Nirmala or an Udasi saint. All of them possessed high moral values but had suffered at the hands of the British. The government became all the more alert with the spread of the message of the Swadeshi, non-cooperation, patriotism and anti-British feelings among the commoners through religious campaign. The dossiers maintained in the office of India's Viceroy Lord Lawrence became bulky. Even otherwise, the government was alert since the times of Lord Canning and Lord Algin.

Secret orders were quickly issued to house arrest the Subas in their own villages and implemented without any loss of time. Thereafter, the Commissioner of Ambala himself travelled to Bhaini Sahib and met the Satguru. He boasted of the long arm of the government. He said, “The government had first put you under house arrest and thereafter, the five heads appointed by you but still you did not come round and instead appointed another seventeen Subas. We had put all of them also under house arrest. What will you do now?”

The Satguru replied in a cool, calm, firm and valiant tone that he would ensure that every household had a Ram Singh. He said, “spark of nationalism ignited by him would soon engulf the hearts of the people like a bonfire and spread to your entire empire and destroy it.” The Commissioner went back disappointed asking the duty Havildar to be more alert.

Whosoever came to Bhaini Sahib, a glimpse of the Satguru gave him an immense pleasure. The Satguru put them in the service of the humanity according to their capacity and advised them never to hesitate from the service of the needy.

Baba Raghubir Singh Udasi came and received the hymn from the Satguru. He was a scholar and as such was given, with due regards, the service to teach the people. He was always in loin clothes and as such Lal Singh Latanie did not pay any respect to him and a complaint went right upto the Satguru. He made the Baba wear the under garments and baptize him by offering him *Amrit* (sacrosanct food). A Sikh asked whether he could eat at his home. The Satguru replied, “Yes, but if he wants to receive the religious hymn and makes a resolve not to take meat or drinks.” One day, a religious recitation group organized a touching ‘Asa di Var’ session. The group was habitual drunkard and meat eater. The Satguru asked them to stop drinking and meat eating and accept only five rupees daily as offerings. This was unacceptable to them and they went back empty handed. Bhai Sudh Singh, Dittoo and Prem Singh Bhadorhia continued holding the recitation sessions.

An utterly poor fellow, Didar Singh from Utana came in search of amelioration of the poverty he was suffering from. The Satguru taught him how to make a string of beads and asked him to put food grains in an earthen pitcher and distribute to the poor. He prospered by doing so.

A thirsty person asked for water to quench his thirst from Suba Pahara Singh while he was taking a bath. He did not give him water fearing that his small metal pitcher (*Gadwa*) used for bathing could be polluted and he would have to clean it again. When

the Satguru came to know of the incident, he punished him to grind one and one fourth mound of grains into flour. He accepted it with humility.

The Satguru was told that Jaimal Singh had used foul language against a Sikh woman. He was punished. After this incident, all Sikhs and Sikh women refrained from any ill doing.

People used to visit Bhaini Sahib in large numbers to have a glimpse of the Satguru. This worried the Commissioner of Ambala and Superintendent Col. R.G. Taylor C.B. He wrote to the Secretary to Punjab Government that he had received reports from Abdul Nadir Khan, a Minister from Patiala and several others, according to which (Guru) Ram Singh should be arrested and the Kukas banned. He was expecting positive orders but he received the reply that his opinion had been forwarded to the Foreign Department of the Government of India. A detailed report was sent on 2nd February, 1867 to the Foreign Department about the Satguru and the Namdhari sect. Permission was sought to take stern action against the actively growing Kuka movement in Ludhiana, Ambala, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Malerkotla, Jind, Patiala, Nabha and Kapurthala districts by sending a list of names of active Kukas which was not granted.

Some district authorities also mentioned the number of active Namdhari Sikhs in their districts. From Gujranwala district, the number mentioned was 2000 while Capt. Bloach wrote on 27th Oct., 1866 that Satguru Ram Singh distributed 80,000 strings of beads thereby meaning that 80,000 people turned Kukas.⁸

During the House arrest of the Satguru, newspapers published reports guessing about the number of Kukas and published reports on the thought behind the movement. Urdu Weekly Asharaf-ul-Akhbar published from Delhi wrote in its 19th December edition on page 20 that "One Sikh named Ram Singh from Ludhiana district (Punjab) is revered by the people as a Prophet. His followers from his sect are numbered about 60,000. Those who are with

him, move from one place to another and convert the people to the new sect.⁹

Urdu Weekly 'Nujum-al-Akhbar' published from Meerut wrote in its 2nd January, 1867 edition on page 47 that, "a carpenter from Ludhiana is reported to have set up a new sect. It has a following of 30,000 neo converts. Even personnel from among the ruling armed forces are among his followers."¹⁰

The 'Raih-noo-mai Punjab' published from Sialkot wrote on page 92 in its edition dated 18th February, 1867 that, "it is a matter of wonder and regret that the Punjabis are again thinking of the old *Sultanat* and crying out against the rules of the Government."¹¹

According to official reports, the Kukas were more than three lakh in numbers. The government was worried at this count but it was not easy for the government to take any firm step against the Satguru who mobilized the villagers in a peaceful manner.

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3. ibid
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5. Sri Adi Garanth Sahib
6. Sri Guru Panth Prakash – Giani Gian Singh
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STRETCHING WINGS FOR HIGHER ACHIEVEMENTS

SATGURU RAM SINGH desired to hold a big congregation on Hola festival in 1867 at Anand Pur to make the British aware of his strength and the discipline they follow. Subas spread the messages among the masses. Suba Lakha Singh was dispatched to Ludhiana to inform the government about it on 6th February, 1867.

The Satguru had his personal postal system. The messages reached faster and secretly through this system. The government did not take even this postal system lightly. The Punjab government informed the Government of India about the Kuka's postal system on 2nd February, 1867.

“The Kukas have a private post of their own which appears to be administratively organized. Confidential letters are circulated much in the same way as the fiery cross was carried through by a highland clan in Scottish bygone days. A Kuka on the arrival at his village of another person of the same sect with a dispatch at once leaves whatever work he may be doing. If in the midst of a repast, not another morsel is eaten. He asks no question but taking the message, starts off running and conveys it to the next relief or his destination.”¹

Maulvi Ghulam Bhikh Jalandhari wrote about the Kuka postal system in his book ‘Tarikh Wakri’:

“Whenever the Guru issued a diktat, he gave that in a written form to one of the Kukas. That person will run the fastest possible delivering the Guru's message at its destination. In reverence to the Guru, he knew his responsibility and carried it out till he was exhausted and was not able to move any farther. He would then hand over the message to another Kuka for delivery at different destinations.”²

The Kukas had received the news about the Anand Pur congregation. The government was in a dilemma over stopping the Guru from holding the congregation. It felt, if the Guru was stopped from proceeding to Anand Pur, there could be two congregations. The people would visit Bhaini Sahib after visiting Anand Pur. The landlords of Bhaini Sahib also told the government that if the congregation was held, the large gathering there would spoil the crops and in such a case how they would be able to pay the land revenue? The Satguru was, on the other hand, firm in his decision to visit Anand Pur. The government did not stop the Satguru from proceeding to Anand Pur.

The Satguru displayed the high moral resistance against the restrictions imposed by the British and left for the birth place of the Khalsa, Anand Pur riding the '*chini mare*' accompanied by a large number of his followers and Subas. The first stop over was at Khamano and people in the small town were overjoyed. They offered three hundred rupees in reverence to the Guru. At Bhoje Majre, a few pundits also received the '*Guru Mantra*'. They reached Anand Pur on the 9th March, 1867 via Ropar after taking rest in the garden of Baba Gurdita at Kirat Pur. A white sheet engulfed the entire surroundings as if the *Swans* (migratory birds) had descended upon there. The Kukas were deeply engrossed into religious recitation. The beating of drums and cymbals was at its peak. They were about ten thousand in number, of which one third were women and children. They were eager to have a glimpse of the Satguru.

The government was closely watching the situation. Deputy Inspector General Mc Andrew started from Lahore on the 10th March. He held detailed talks with Commissioner of Jalandhar on 12th March. He asked one Deputy Inspector and 10 sepoy to accompany him. They were all non-Sikhs, either Muslim or Hindu Rajputs. He took along former Commander of Sherdil Regiment S. Atar Singh as a loyal Sikh. They were accompanied by Police Inspectors of Amritsar and Ferozepur Kutub Khan and Fatehdeen. They reached Hoshiarpur on the 13th March and exchanged views

with Deputy Commissioner Parkins about the arrangements at the Hola Mohalla. He felt the police force was inadequate. Therefore, one Inspector, one Deputy Inspector and some sepoy joined them from there and the entire force put up its camp near Takhat Kesgarh on reaching Anand Pur. They started taking stock of the situation by patrolling to avert any untoward happening.

Col. Mc Andrew and Parkins called for Hari Singh, the Head Priest of Takhat Kesgarh Sahib. He was informed about the possibility of the arrival of the Kukas. He said if the Kukas reached there to pay their obeisance it would threaten peace. More than two hundred Nihangs (ardent Sikhs in blue robes) were armed from top to toe to stop them. They virtually rebuked the head priest telling him that if anything unsavory happens, the Head Priest would be held personally responsible for it. He succumbed to the pressure but put up three conditions:

1. The turban of not even a single Kuka should be allowed to be taken off meaning that he should not go into ecstasy.
2. The hair on the head should not be untied.
3. They should not take out shrieking voices.

After listening to him, he was allowed to go.

According to the government report prepared by the Inspector Police Hoshiarpur Fazal Hussain – ‘As soon as the Satguru reached the government camp on the 19th March 1867 along with his 20 Subas on horse backs and more than 8,000 followers to the beating of drums and holding high the unfurled flag amidst the recitation of hymns and prayers to the accompaniment of musical instruments, Col. Mc Andrew and other officers came out of their camp. On seeing them, the Satguru raised his arm and the procession stopped raising voices and silence prevailed. Playing of musical instruments Hand recitation was also stopped. The officers were astonished at this act of discipline. In response to the nod, the Suba Sudh Singh, the Satguru himself and other Subas disembarked. During the talks with the officers, they explained that the purpose of their visit was to pay obeisance. They were told about the three conditions put forward by the head priest which

were accepted. S. Atar Singh carried this message to the head priest.

The Kukas put up their camp on that day and held a musical recitation programme in their tents and thereafter dispersed for taking rest. The Nihangs, Akalis, Sodhis and Bedis were opposed to the Satguru paying obeisance at the Gurudwaras. About 600 Nihangs armed with spears, axes, small axes, *chakar* (quoits) and *Safajung* (battle axes), etc. were ready in their Bungas and determined to stop the Satguru and his followers from paying their obeisance at the Gurdwara.

At around seven in the morning on 20th March 1867, when Satguru Ram Singh Ji with his one hundred Sikh followers reached Takhat Kesgarh Sahib to pay their obeisance, about fifty armed Nihangs tried to stop them. Inspector Fazal Hussain and Kutub Shah called in reinforcements and warned them not to proceed further. But they were determined to reach the Gurudwara and realizing their helplessness, the Nihangs fled the spot. The Satguru paid his respects in a peaceful manner and offered 25 rupees and *Karah Parshad*. The priest did not offer prayers for them. As ordained by the Satguru, Brahm Singh offered the prayer and distributed the *Karah Parshad*. The Gurudwara priest gave the reasons for not offering the prayer for them - (a) to consider himself as God (b) distribution of *Guru Mantra* instead of initiation into the Khalsa by offering *Khande-di-Pahul* (Amrit) (c) to recognize Hazro born Guru and the Guru residing at Bhaini Sahib instead of the Patna Sahib born Guru and the Guru residing at Anand Pur and (d) to untie the hair and shriek loudly in ecstasy like the Muslims. He said such a person is not a Sikh.

The Satguru asked by writing a letter to the priest in Gurmukhi reminding him that they eat meat, take drinks, indulge in prostitution and immorality, kill their female progeny and act against the Guru's percepts, what kind of the Sikhs they were?

The Satguru visited the Gurudwara of Guru Teg Bahadur along with his Sikh and non-Sikh followers. They offered 25 rupees and distributed the *Karah Parshad*.

50 persons were converted as kukas in this fair. According to Fazal Hussain, "Guru Ram Singh distributed clothes to the poor and fed them on his account. He was truly a pious person. He was away from bad deeds and Kukas called him prophet. The government had no complaint against him of creating violence, breach of peace and raising voice against the British government"³

Still the growing influence of the Kukas, their congregations and the discipline was an eyesore to the British. At times, the Kukas also used to raise their voice openly. Mihan Singh Lulowala Mastana told the British officer, "Mind your expansionism, the Guru is there now. You have come from London. The owner of this land has appeared on this earth."

Someone sarcastically sang in ecstasy in a musical congregation:

'What did you see? The foreigners are on the run
What did you see? Their days are numbered.'

After returning to Bhaini Sahib from Anand Pur, the Satguru chalked out a programme to celebrate Diwali festival at Amritsar. As per the dictum, the Subas Braham Singh and Joga Singh went to the area and began the publicity campaign. Subas Kahan Singh Nihang and Sahib Singh went to Lahore to seek permission. The British authorities said, "Should we give permission to lose our regime? Go away. No permission would be granted."⁴

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

On return to Ludhiana, they asked for permission from the Deputy Commissioner who asked them to take permission from Lahore. The Sikhs conveyed this to the Satguru. He issued the diktat that Diwali would be celebrated in Amritsar itself.

Dussehra festival was celebrated at Bhaini Sahib. More than 3,000 people attended the celebrations. The Kukas residing in far off places got the information to reach Amritsar on the Diwali festival.

The Lt. Governor of Punjab wrote to India's Viceroy Lord

Lawrence that, “Kukas were organising a massive gathering despite refusal of permission by the government. If force was used to stop it, it could lead to a revolt. What should be done?” The reply came that a close watch be kept and a situation report sent to the Viceroy. Police Superintendent Capt. Menzies was asked to keep an eye on the festivities. Otherwise, the Government allowed celebration of the festival.

On a request from Baba Darbara Singh, the Satguru first visited his village Raipur (Ludhiana) and thereafter made a stop over at Jalandhar via Muthada. He reached Amritsar after crossing the river Beas. About 800 Kukas were already busy setting up the tents and organizing community kitchen at Chatiwind gate near Ghariali pond. Today, it is called Samdu’s pond. Mother Jassan, Bibi Nanda, S. Mangal Singh Bishanpuria and other Sikhs accompanied the Satguru.

The Subas who reached there were: Subas Sudh Singh, Sahib Singh, Naina Singh, Maluk Singh, Lakha Singh, Samund Singh, Kahn Singh, Khazan Singh, Jamiat Singh, Jota Singh, Brahma Singh, Pahara Singh and Baba Jawahar Singh.

Sikh historian Giani Gian Singh also participated in the festivity. According to government figures, about 12,000 Kukas attended the festival on 26th and 27th October. About three to four thousand Kukas were busy making stay arrangements in the Bungas (minarets) and in tents. Where ever one could see in the streets, in markets; everywhere there were Kukas to be seen in white robes wearing beads of white wool. The government administration had specially called police Inspector Narain Singh from Lahore to keep a vigil on the Satguru.

The Satguru had asked his Subas and other preachers not to talk about anything that may be offending. They were asked only to preach about Swadeshi, non-cooperation, the Sikh Code of Conduct and the holy utterances. He did not give any chance to haul him up.

The Satguru went to Harimandir Sahib at 5.30 a.m. on 27th October, 1867 along with his about 50 ardent Sikh followers. By

the time he reached the complex, the number swelled to 200 to 300. He carried 21 plates full of *Karah Parshad* and first of all made an offering of 1100 rupees and proceeded to the *Bunga*. The priests did not accept the offering. They also did not offer prayer for the *Karah Parshad*. The Nihangs and the priests were skeptical that they may not take over possession of the premises. The Head priest of the Takhat was Mangal Singh (Ramgarhia).

When the Satguru talked of joint efforts for cooperative and respectful living, the priest said the Kukas were not Sikhs as they recited religious percepts of muslims i.e. *Kalaam* and go into ecstasy.

He put up conditions for accepting the *Karah Parshad*:

‘Pay a religious punishment of five lakh rupees.

Put on a blue turban.

The Satguru put on the blue turban to please them but did not accept the condition of the religious punishment. The Nihang priest did not budge from his position. Revered Mangal Singh proposed to hold a competition of recitation of the Holy Scriptures but the priests did not agree.

This enraged the Satguru and he walked out. There was a black marble strip. He paid his obeisance at that place and said that none of the Sikhs will go beyond that marble plate.

The Satguru went to Sri Harimandir Sahib, made the offerings, distributed the *Karah Prasad*, paid his obeisance and the priests accepted it. In reverence, they offered him a shawl and a turban. He went to the Gurdwara Baba Attal Rai and was honoured there also.

A large number of Hindus and Sikhs visited his temporary abode in Amritsar to have a glimpse of their Guru. They included Shamsheer Singh Rajasansi, his brother Thakur Singh, Mr. Stockers, Mr. Clarke, priest and Assistant Police Commissioner Christi. When Shamsheer Singh Rajasansi came to know of the bad treatment met out to the Satguru by the priests of the Akal Takhat, he went there and told them, “You waive off my punishment out of fear and keep

me in good humour. You do not ask me about my shortcomings. I enjoy prostitution, eat meat and drink. I indulge in all five vices but still you waive off my punishment. You declare religiously guilty only those who rise early, take bath in the wee hours and recite in praise of God and offer prayers. All of you, all the priests need to be put behind the bars.”⁵ (Satguru Bilas Part I)

Next day, on the 28th October, the Satguru again set out for the Gurudwara along with his 500 followers to pay their obeisance. They were stopped by the police sergeant fearing breach of peace. Suba Lakha Singh spoke rudely to the Sergeant but the Satguru stopped him from doing so.

Namdhari principles were highly publicized in this festival. More than 2,000 additional followers joined the Satguru. He appointed the 20 year old young daughter of Sant Ratan Singh as Suba thereby honouring the weak, oppressed and powerless women folk. She was honoured with the given name of Mai Mahatma. She stayed at Nabha most of the time and died at the age of 98.

Giani Gian Singh writes about the diwali lights at Amritsar:

“Amidst the diwali lights at the sacred tank
at Amritsar in the 24th year
the wielder of authority had come to visit and made a
difference
set up his camp outside Chatiwind gate
accompanied by about twenty thousand Kuka Sikhs.
When he reached the Darbar Sahib with the offerings
the priest played the dirty tricks.
Someone demanded thousands of rupees in bribe
and someone demanded four to five lakhs
as religious punishment
Restrictions were imposed that
no Kuka would remove the turban in ecstasy.
No one is a Sikh who does not wear a blue turban.

Ram Singh said this is only within the powers of the God he does not have powers to that extent and it suited him.”⁶

(Sri Guru Panth Parkash)

He had already written about the Saydani *Kalam* (writings):
 “Those who spoke of the purity of religion
 have already been tested.”⁷

On the basis of reports from this festival, Captain Menzies wrote about Suba Sahib Singh:

‘Sahib Singh was a prominent follower (of Guru Ram Singh) who in reality was listened to more attentively than even Guru Ram Singh himself.’

As happens in a normal fair, there was no quarreling or dacoity during this festival. Menzies admitted that the Kukas were a very well behaved, disciplined and obedient mass gathering. For this reason, the Kuka movement was well accepted. This highly elated the Satguru.

The priests however could not digest this honour bestowed on the Satguru. Apart from the Bunga, Mukatsar, Damdama, Anand Pur, Patna and Abhichal Nagar, they wrote to other gurudwaras also that “Satguru Ram Singh was a religiously punished person. Do not accept his offerings or the *Karah Prasad* for the prayer. He went to Nankana Sahib after the Diwali festival. But the priests there also did not receive him well. The Satguru visited Majha, Naake, Sandalbar Varan etc. Under his influence, Virk, Jhabbar and Varn were consecrated as Kukas. He reached Bhaini Sahib after visiting Chuharhkana.

The Satguru ordered the Subas to step up the publicity campaign more forcefully. Where ever needed, group leaders visited along with their groups. Ghanaia Singh visited Peshawar and Haripur areas, Jagat Singh Dera Baba Nanak, Bhai Kahan Singh Rawalpindi, Bhai Jamiat Singh visited the district of Gujranwala and Baba Mahla Singh Jethupure visited Montgomery. They preached the people to lead a pious life, refrain from narcotics

and to pray the God. More people joined and the numbers of the Kukas started swelling.

The Satguru himself visited Malwa area. Towards the end of 1867, he visited Rampur, Gurhtharhi, Landa, Buani, Khatrhe and Mangowal and reached Siarh administering the *Guru Mantra* to the people for meditation. Thereafter, he visited Jarhtauli, Dedhlon, Raipur, Lohgarh and both Nangals via Rashin, Ladana. Next he went to Gujjarwal, Nangal, Pakhowal, Burj, Bassian, Boparai, Hathoorh, Jhorran, Chhiniwala, Raisar, Channanwal, Naiwala, Barnala, Handiaia, Farwahin, Karamgarh, Mooma, Mahilan, Tallewal and Takhtupura. At Takhtupura, Dr. Sher Singh and his parents received the *Guru Mantra* for meditation.

Satguru's audience and his teachings left an indelible mark of high moral values on the people to follow the religion and to be a true nationalist on the otherwise blank mind of the villagers. So this link never broke off. The people of villages Lopo, Saide, Badhni Khote, Nangal, Chhajawal, Dhurhkot, Bhadaurh, Kotha Guru Ka, Burj Rode, Lande, Dhilwan, Maurh, Maraj, Phool, Pithomandi, etc. felt proud to wear the ordained dress and considered themselves to be lucky.

Nahar Singh, M.A. has given a detailed account in his works 'Namdhari History' as to how the Subas and Group Leaders in Majha, Doaba, Pothohar, Multan and Puadh worked tirelessly to spread the movement far and wide. On the basis of available evidence, Maulvi Ghulam Bhikh Jalandhari wrote in 1882 that, "the followers of Nanak Shah and Guru Gobind Singh increased in reality as follows.

"On seeing their large groups, it appeared that this particular sect had progressed very fast. Village after village and habitations had converted to Kukas. Even Guru Nanak, who was the founder had started the movement, was not lucky enough to gather even one thousand followers in ten years. His sect swelled during the later Gurus' period. But during this prophet's time, lakhs of people turned Kukas.⁸

(Twarikh Wakri)

On 20th January, 1868, the I.G. Police Punjab wrote to the Secretary, Government of Punjab that according to the reports reaching him, the year 1867 was a very lucky year for the Kukas. This report was sent to the Government of India office in Kolkotta and to the British government in London. They were requested to advice about the steps to be taken in this regard. The report said that a village carpenter (Satguru Ram Singh) became so famous that the son of Amir (ruler) from Kabul (Afghanistan) came to Bhaini Sahib to meet him. It was a different issue that the government could not get to know what transpired between them.

The Indian officers of the Frontier regiment were deeply concerned over the reports published about the principles followed by the Kukas. It was published quoting the D.I.G. Police Ambala Circle Major Bamfield that the number of followers of Ram Singh was increasing. It was reported quoting the Police Superintendent Captain Harris that, “in Ambala district there were hardly any Kukas earlier and they could be counted on fingers but even though there was no permanent Suba, 15 villages had come under the influence of the Satguru.”

The report mentioned about the Diwali celebrations also. It said that the traders offered 700 rupees and 12 superior quality rolls of cloth. It mentioned about the situation in other districts also. A directive came from the authorities on 18th June, 1868 that their activities should be strictly watched. The government had no occasion, as yet, to take firm steps against him.

The Kuka Sikhs celebrated the Maghi fair in 1868 at Mukatsar with the blessings of the Satguru. There also the priests of the Gurudwara built in memory of the tenth Sikh Guru and 40 martyrs (*Mukte*) neither accepted (*parsad*) sacrosanct food nor prayed for them. They set the condition to wear blue turban, pay religious punishment fee and make the pond pucca. The Satguru exposed the priest and Tapa Hari Singh Nihang of being characterless. They were fully exposed.

The S.H.O. of Kotwal had been there to keep a close watch on the activities of the Satguru. He sent a secret report. The Satguru, as a routine, offered prayers and distributed the consecrated food and was ready for the next visit.

The Satguru visited Rupana, Tharajwala, Kuraliwala, Lakarhwali, Khunana, Thuhewal, Jhandwali, Suag and Baluana before reaching Malout.

Satguru's move to have audiences in villages increased the numbers of his followers, the Kukas. When he reached Thraj village after visiting Gadadob, Dandiwal and Wadhtirath, he was accompanied by ecstatic Lahina Singh, Anup Singh, Bhag Singh etc. from Sakraudi and other villages. Their group was called 'Shahidi Group'. Women also joined. When they reached Nangal, the Shahidi group found that the brother of Suba Giani Ratan Singh was keeping an evil eye on the women folk. He was first asked not to walk rubbing shoulders with women members but when he did not heed the advice, he was beaten but was saved by the Sikhs.

The Satguru received a complaint against the ecstatic Sikhs. He found that they were creating musical sounds by striking their bracelets with steel glasses and sang, "As the twinkling bells ring, the British were on the run." The Satguru got enraged at their beating someone. He made them stand up and beat them with sticks but they kept cool. He ordered that nobody would serve food to them.

The Satguru reached Kotli from Nangal and Kasaiwarha from Halkianwali with a group of Kukas. Gurdit Singh landlord offered food in the community kitchen. Everybody took the food but the ecstatic did not as they had no orders to that effect. The Satguru was requested to have his food but he also refused to take it. When pestered again, he agreed to take food but said all the ecstatic should be fed first only then he would take food. He kept himself hungry from the day he punished the ecstatic group from taking food. In the words of Vidhata Singh Tir:

‘This is the height of love
nothing in the world could affect it
if a Sikh is without food
the Satguru cannot take even a morsel.’

The Kukas thus went on gaining strength to strength.

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4. Satguru Bilas Part I : Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal
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COMPLAINTS AND VIGIL

THE KUKAS did not remain an unidentified sect because of the events in their movement and the ethics they followed between 1857 and 1868. No one was in any doubt that it was the uprising of a group of people having anti establishment feelings. Apart from the British government, how could the traders, landlords, Sardars, Kings and Maharajas and the stooges of the British consider them as good persons? They would make their presence felt simply by lodging a complaint against the Kukas, even though the government itself was keeping a close vigil on them.

The King of Faridkot Wazir Singh was afraid of the growing influence of the Kukas. He started taking firm action against them after their gathering at the Maghi festival at Mukatsar. He called barber Deva Singh of village Gangera and warned him not to be a Sikh follower of the carpenter (Guru Ram Singh). He replied, "He was the Sikh of the Almighty and was under the refuse of the true Guru." The King made the sepoy's beat him but when the Kuka Sikh remained firm in his decision, he was let off.

King Raghubir Singh of Sangrur rebuked the Kuka Sikhs and sent them to Amritsar to teach them a lesson not to follow the Kuka rituals and to convert them into devout Sikhs by giving them the *Amrit* and recovery of religious fine from them. The priests however could not have their say.

The father of Hira Singh Sakraudi invited religious singers and reciters of scriptures after receiving the *Guru Mantra*. They stopped at Patiala in a garden. King Mahendra Singh sent Dula Singh to report on the activities of the Kukas and to receive the *Guru Mantra*. The Sikhs made him take a bath and baptized him by offering the *Guru Mantra*. He felt himself to be a completely changed person. On going back, he told the King that it was the religious initiation as propagated by the ten Gurus. Many other

service personnel received the *Guru Mantra* at the instigation of Dula Singh. The King, being a minor, a Council of Regency governed the state affairs. The King was terrified at the conversion of the Sikhs to Kukas. He banned the congregation and forced the Sikhs to leave while it was still dark. They included Lahina Singh Sakraudi and all those servicemen who were baptized and had received the sacred hymn. But they remained attached to the Satguru.

Once Mangal Singh Bishanpuria, requested the Satguru to lead a procession, riding on elephant back, through the streets of Patiala, amidst the beating of drums. The Satguru politely replied him that the meditation and prayer had the biggest power and he would like to use it against their misadventure.

Satguru Balak Singh's nephew Kahn Singh came for an audience with Satguru Ram Singh who baptized him and appointed him the priest of Hazro.

During that period of complaints and counter complaints, a greedy officer from the small Railway Station of Doraha (Ludhiana) Mr. Donovan sent two secret letters directly to India's Viceroy Sir John Lawrence on the 7th September, 1868 and 30th September, 1868 expecting a reward. The issues raised were:

- "One Suba has given me this report, which is true.
- (Guru Ram Singh, in his speeches, describes the Christians as foreigners belonging to low castes. He asks all high or low caste Hindus to throw the British out of the country.
- He is against the white skinned people, who kill the cow and eat cow meat.
- There is a great danger to the country from (Guru) Ram Singh and he should be hanged till death."

The Government did not pay any heed to these reports as, contrary to this, a government report in 1868 said:

- “Kuka movement is on the wane.

- All Sikhs do not recognize him as their Guru with opposition from the Sikh priests. Therefore, (Guru) Ram Singh is disappointed.

- Indiscipline and moral turpitude have taken over the Kukas.

- (Guru) Ram Singh’s respect is on the down slide. He was trying to regain it.”¹

Both the reports were exaggerated and one-sided. In 1869, for these very reasons, the vigil and cruelty against the Kuka Sikhs increased. The I.G. Police Punjab, Lieutenant Col. G. Hutchinson sent a report to Secretary Lahore based on the reports received from different districts.

In fact, the Kukas were in high spirits because of the growing influence of their success. They considered their comforts as the blessings of Guru Ram Singh. The people of Malwa region were particularly happy as Malwa was the birth place of the Satguru.

On the other hand, the British were instigating the Muslims. Therefore, they killed cows initially secretly but later openly and took cow meat. According to Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal:

“The Muslims killed cows with the help of the white skinned. After invading India from abroad, they have opened butcheries in the country of the Hindus.”

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

This infuriated the Sikhs, who declared, “kill the Muslims.”

About two to two and a half hundred Sikhs (according to government records, ecstatic Sikhs) left their homes, taking all the money and ornaments of their women folk at Rupana leaving behind their homes widely open and proceeded to Bhaini Sahib. They reached Kuraiwala. The Sikhs openly spoke against the government and the killers of the cow. Deputy Inspector Police Dewan Baksh followed them on horse back along with several sepoys. He considered Kukas as rebels. When he spoke rudely and used foul

language against the Satguru, the Sikhs became furious. Bela Singh and Bali Singh from Thairajwala dragged him from the horse back, snatched his sword and thrashed him. The sepoy accompanying him ran away. He also ran for his life and hid himself in somebody's house from where he escaped in darkness disguised as a woman.

One of the sepoy went straight to Ferozepur. He exaggerated the report on the attack on the British Government servant and said he was beaten with a stick and attached with an axe. He also spoke about the rebellion by the Kukas.

Police Superintendent Ferozepur district Mr. Turton dispatched 125 horse riders and 20 foot sepoy to Mukatsar on 1st March, 1869. On reaching there they came to know from the officiating Tehsildar Alam Shah that the Kukas had gathered at Tharajwala district Sirsa. Mukatsar was 34 miles away from Ferozepur and about 31 miles away from Tharajwala. In a quick march, the Assistant Commissioner Wakefield, the police force and the British stooge Sodhi Man Singh reached Tharajwala the same afternoon at about two p.m. The Sikhs were surrounded from all sides. 44 Kuka Sikhs were arrested for interrogation. They were rebuked if they spoke of the ill treatment being meted out to them.

Their ornaments, gold, silver and more than Rs. 5,000/- in cash were confiscated. They had brought these things to offer to the Satguru. They were brought to Mukatsar via Malout after walking several miles of long distance. A case of rebellion was registered against them in the court of D.C. Ferozepur. 37 Kukas were let off and sent home but the remaining seven Sikhs were awarded punishments and fines, as follows:

- Bhola Singh and Bali Singh were given three months imprisonment and ten rupees fine each.
- Bachitar Singh Kuraliwala (Mukatsar) was awarded six months imprisonment.
- Harnam Singh, Sirsa – one year imprisonment and 25 rupees fine.

- Manna Singh Chuni (Sirsa) – one year imprisonment and 25 rupees fine and if the fine was not paid, further imprisonment.
- Mastan Singh (Samund Singh), Tharajwala (Sirsa) – 18 months imprisonment and 25 rupees fine or six months further imprisonment, if the fine was not paid.
- Surmukh Singh, village Bholiwala (Mukatsar) – 10 rupees fine or 3 month imprisonment.

The government stooge Sodhi Man singh who was instrumental behind the episode was appointed as Honorary Magistrate.

In 1869, the Satguru celebrated the Hola Mahalla at Mannanwala (Sialkot) at the request of Sardar Hira Singh Mannanwalia. He had stopped taking meat and drinks following the Guru's teachings. At the Hola festival, the Satguru led a procession riding on the back of an elephant. The recitation from the scriptures was at its peak and the congregation sprinkled colours at the festival. 1,800 more Sikhs joined the Satguru. They included the son-in-law of S. Hari Singh Nalwa Lahina Singh Gharjakhia, Sher Singh, nephew of the Governor of Peshawar Mahan Singh during the Khalsa regime and the authoritarian (*dabang*) Mai Bhagan of Sher Kot.

Sardar Hira Singh presented a good breed mare with golden saddle, 1,100 rupees in cash, a royal cloak worth 500 rupees and many more presents and paid his obeisance and bowed before the Satguru.

The Satguru was on a visit to Darhap when he came to know about the Tharajwala incident. He understood very well how perplexed the government was.

The reports received by the government from different districts said that in Jalandhar district, about 137 more persons became Kukas and in Gurdaspur 125.

Historian Nahar Singh, M.A. writes in an analysis, “The thirteen to fourteen years of sustained publicity efforts, resulted in 95 out of every 100 Sikhs turning Namdharis, who followed the rituals, always kept the five Ks and became pious by being baptised. In Punjab and other states, many jat Sikhs from the higher strata, holding a good influence in the society, turned Namdharis.”² (Namdhari History, Part I)

In his report on 4th November, 1871 on the growing influence of Satguru Ram Singh, Macnabb writes:

“(Guru) Ram Singh has no pretention to be the saintly *faqir*. He visits you attended by half a dozen horsemen. He is followed by scores of men on foot. He comes into your room like a prince, surrounded by courtiers. He and his people are dressed in exquisitely fine white clothes.”³

According to these reports, the complaints and the close watch kept on the Satguru and his follower Kuka Sikhs could not stop the growing Kuka movement and the Kuka sect. D.I.G. Ambala Circle Lt. General Mc Andrew wrote on the 20th November, 1871 that: “when we first heard of him as the successor of Balak Ram (Singh) of Hazro, he was known as Ram Singh, afterwards as Guru Ram Singh, then as Satguru and now Satguru Badshah.”⁴

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KUKAS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE KUKA SIKHS with their high moral values and achievements in social reforms were getting full support of the people in their movement aimed at independence of the country. The spiritual power given by the Satguru was proving to be quite effective. With permission from Satguru Ram Singh Ji, Sikhs who were very active and Subas started spreading their wings outside Punjab, contacting other states and those fighting for independence and the countries opposed to the British Empire.

Contact with Kashmir

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had brought Kashmir under Sikh rule in 1876 Bikrami (1819 A.D.). Raja Gulab Singh cleverly purchased Kashmir from the British in 1846 after the first war between the Sikhs and the British at a payment of 75 lakh rupees. He was honoured with the title of Maharaja by the British. Dewan Kirpa Ram Aimnabadi was his Prime Minister and one Vedanti was his Guru and Chief Advisor.

In 1867, after the death of Maharaja Gulab Singh, his successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh felt that the British were interfering too much. He extended a hand of friendship to Nepal and Russia in Central Asia and sent Mansukh as his emissary. Mansukh was the head of the Secret Department.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's Guru Vedanti cautioned him from time to time about the treacherous moves of the British. He made efforts to extend a hand of friendship towards anti British organizations or powers. It could be direct or indirect. Extending a hand of friendship to Nepal and Russia was the result of his thinking.

The Kukas of Gujranwala and Sialkot had already contacted Vedanti monk. When the Satguru was told about this development, he asked Sant Kishan Singh of Granth Garh to explore the possibility of establishing contacts with the Maharaja of Kashmir. He talked to Vedanti who created a congenial atmosphere for talks with Maharaja Ranbir Singh. He was told about the political activities of the Kuka sect and their observance of rituals according to Hindu traditions and about their religious activities. He was told that Satguru Ram Singh Ji had about seven lakh followers. Sant Kishan Singh praised the Maharaja for keeping Kashmir as independent Hindu regime. He assured the Maharaja of all help by the Kuka Sikhs which might be needed by him.

The Satguru had chalked out a programme to visit Gujranwala and Sialkot in the summer of 1869. In accordance with the already decided policy, about 30 Kuka Sikhs were sent to Kashmir along with Hira Singh Lambu of Sadhaura, district Ambala, Tara Singh and Desa Singh, district Amritsar, Lal Singh, Patiala and Chanda Singh, Amritsar. They requested for employment there. The Maharaja at the request of Vedanti, assured the honest, innocent and loyal Kukas when they met him to recruit them as a separate regiment provided they were able to recruit more Sikhs. The monthly salary of Hira Singh Sadhaura was fixed at 30 rupees, Tara Singh 15 rupees, Lal Singh 12 rupees, Bahadur Singh 11 rupees, Mool singh 10 rupees and for other recruits 9 rupees. This was partly to be paid in cash and partly in the form of flour.

The Kuka Sikhs returned and told the Satguru about the offer by the Maharaja. On his approval, Hira Singh went back to Kashmir with 150 Kuka Sikh youth. All of them were recruited. The salary of these jawans was one rupee more than the Dogra sepoy. Hira Singh was their Commander. They were being trained systematically and were posted in border areas. They went to the Gilgit border. More Kukas were called for recruitment. By November 1870, their number went upto 250.

The British authorities were not unaware of these activities. Inspector General Police Punjab Lt. Col G. Hutchinson wrote to

the Secretary Civil Department of Punjab government in 1869 in a report that:

“In November reports were received that the Maharaja of Kashmir was raising a Kuka Regiment and that each recruit received a certificate from (Guru) Ram Singh before setting out for Kashmir.”¹

In a report in 1870, it was mentioned about the Kukas that: “We have heard that a batch of twenty recruits were on their way and some what later the battalion numbered from 200 to 250 strong. The men were given armed training. One Ram Singh said to have been on leave was mentioned as a Commandant.”²

Dewan Kirpa Ram, the Prime Minister of Kashmir was getting no success in poisoning the ears of the Maharaja against the Kuka regiment and to be loyal to the British regime. However, he was sending reports to the British officers from time to time. The British rulers dispatched one person towards the end of 1869 to Kashmir to get reports from there. A Deputy Inspector also gave out some details on return from Kashmir in 1870.

Kahan Singh and Hira Singh were close to the Maharaja because of their ability. The Kuka regiment had no restrictions to wear military uniform. The Maharaja was highly impressed with their loyalty and fulfillment of their duties with devotion and responsibility.

Coincidentally, opposition to the British Government's cow slaughter policy and zeal to protect the cow and the poor resulted in skirmishes between the Kukas and the butchers. It turned the tables for the Kukas and was a God sent opportunity for Dewan Kirpa Ram. He poisoned the ears of Maharaja Ranbir Singh saying that “the Resident is against the Kukas and considered them their enemy. If the Kukas were not sent back, the consequences could be bad for the state. Even the regime could be over thrown.”

There is a saying, “the Kings love their kingdom, the mothers their sons.” Therefore, the Maharaja felt it proper to disband the

Kuka regiment. Commander Hira Singh was conveyed the Government's order in this connection. Eventhough, the Kukas returned home towards the end of 1871, they left an indelible mark on the minds of the people.

Relations with Nepal

Nepal is a hilly state in the North East of India. Maharaja Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered the neighbouring hilly areas and established his rule in 1760. Kathmandu was its capital city.

The Maharaja of Nepal was highly offended at the expansionism of the British Empire in India. He wanted to extend full help to the Indian princely states to overthrow the British. He felt the Punjabis were more powerful to achieve this goal. For this reason, he sent his Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief Bhimsen to meet Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1814. The emissary told the Sher-e-Punjab about their strategy against the British and extended to him their full support.

The Maharaja of Nepal Prithvi Narayan Shah sent Pandit Padam Mani as his emissary to the rulers in the South. He talked to the Marathas also but this scheme of things could not see the light of the day. The British viewed the activities of the Nepalis very seriously as the King of Nepal had usurped 200 villages of Darjeeling. He attached and conquered Gorakhpur also. Lord Hastings gave a stern warning but it did not cut any ice with the King who conquered Bhutwal and Seoraj districts also and brought these under his rule. When Lord Hastings failed to get the conquered areas vacated, he declared war in 1814. The Nepalis repulsed three attacks but were forced to lay down their arms in the fourth attack under Commander Actloni. The King of Nepal had to enter into Sagauli Treaty in 1816. He was forced to lift his rule from Garhwal and Kumaon and host a British Resident in Kathmandu. The Nepali Gorkhas remained loyal to the British after that and even fought the 1857 war in their support.

The British went on treading a treacherous path to create

dissentions among the Nepali rulers. They watched amusingly the game plan and the fighting among Bhimsen Thapa, Pandey, Matabar Singh and Jung Bahadur Singh for becoming Prime Minister.

The Special Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh had Nepalis on its rolls. General Matabar Singh and his nephew (sister's son) Jung Bahadur had stayed in Lahore. In 1843, The King of Nepal decided in favour of Matabar Singh and he was appointed the Prime Minister because of his qualities and efficiency. He appointed Jung Bahadur also in a senior position but he killed his uncle and his close associates in 1847 and became the Prime Minister himself.

Jung Bahadur was very clever and an adept strategist. He would not annoy the British as also put up a loyal face to the Khalsa rulers as he had served the Lahore regime. For this reason, he gave political asylum to Maharani Jindan, who was moving like a rolling stone and gave her full state honours.

Though the Gorkhas helped the British in the 1857 War of India's Independence, still Jung Bahadur allowed shelter in Nepal to war heroes Nana Farhanvis, Nawab Abdul Majid Khan of Lucknow, Babu Koir Singh, Baba Bandhu Singh and Kanwar Singh and so on. The British asked for their handing over to them but he did not respond.

The Kuka Sikhs were ordained to throw the British across the seven seas. For them enemy's enemy was a friend and they extended a hand of friendship to Nepal.

Kishan Singh of Granth Garh, who is named as Hira Singh in many writings stayed at Fatehwal. He joined Nepal army. Two other Sikhs also joined the Nepal army. He rose to become a Subedar and came in close proximity of the King. He had made his position in 1868 through a Punjabi Havildar Nand Ram. At an appropriate time, he spoke about "the twelfth Guru and praised the Sikh Panth" before the Prime Minister Jung Bahadur.

(Satguru Bilas)

And After that:

"On hearing about the Guru's deeds and about the Panth,

the Nepal King Rana Jang Bahadur gave a positive response. The cow and the poor will get protection. We are the Hindu kings, so they will protect us. The British do not allow us to visit Punjab. If they allow us, we could visit Amritsar to pay our obeisance and have a glimpse of the twelfth Guru. We can also appeal to stop cow slaughter going on in Greater Punjab, in a country of Chhatris'. On hearing the words of praise about the 12th Guru, the King gave them respect. He said, "The Guru was the incarnation of religion. The Satguru had raised the banner of religion. We also want the spread of religion. We want the religion to flourish. We have worked in the area for it. The rituals propagated by the Satguru may flourish. An ideal atmosphere may prevail in the country. The British and the Muslim rule should end. It should be the rule of the Guru. If there was such a Guru, then he would definitely rule. Cow slaughter will end. Sin will vanish and religion will prevail." The King asked the Sikhs as to which animal was the best animal in their country. The Sikhs replied that buffaloes were the good animal. The King asked them to call for two buffaloes. The Sikhs wrote to the Satguru at Ramdas Pura (Sri Bhaini Sahib) that the King wanted two buffaloes. The Satguru despatched two buffaloes and two mules. The Satguru directed them that nothing should be accepted in return. They should carry the buffaloes and mules to Nepal and should stay there. The King was highly pleased. He offered some money, a horse, a string of musk beads, two *Khukris* (fighter knives), a shawl and 40 metre expensive dress material."³

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

The Satguru gave one thousand rupees to Bhagwan Singh and entrusted him with the responsibility of sending good breed buffaloes and mules. Suba Sahib Singh and Kahn Singh Nihang went as emissaries to talk to Jang Bahadur. Attar Singh, Thamman Singh and two other Kuka Sikhs carried the animals with them. It was a secret and a successful mission and rich cultural and moral values and traditions were behind it. As Suba Kahan Singh was close to the Lahore rulers, it did not take much time to have a congenial atmosphere. The Satguru felt it proper to depute the Suba only because of this bonhomie. After the Royal stay, when

they asked for permission to go back, despite their repeated refusal, gifts were thrust upon them. They carried a letter for the Satguru which when delivered at Bhaini Sahib, the Satguru found time to read it, sitting aloof. As per the orders of the Satguru, Baba Kishan Singh Fatehwal stayed back in Nepal. He came closer to Col Achhara Singh. He also came close to Moti Singh Ajitan, son of Hari Singh Nalwa who was employed there. He freely moved among the well-wisher Sikh army men and Udasi monks in Nepal.

The Nepal Resident Col. R.C. Lawrence once heard about the high moral values observed by Kuka Sikhs from Prime Minister Jang Bahadur and became suspicious. He immediately sent a report in 1870 to the Secretary in the Foreign Department of the government of India C.C. Aitchison about the Kukas carrying gifts. Relations were improving as Man Singh Jat of Faridkot was employed in Nepal Durbar and was close to the authorities.

The British became cautious. They began investigations at a war footing and reports swelled the official file. Everybody is free to have his own views. They again mistook the Kukas as militia. The Deputy Inspector General of Police, Lahore Circle Lt Col. J.P.C. Baillie wrote to I.G. Police, Punjab that the proprietor of the Aftab Press Dewan Buta Singh, a loyalist of Maharani Jindan, who had been bereft of her seat of authority had been meeting Kuka priests and Heads and could be 'behind the move.'

A report was also sent from India on 1st April, 1871 to the Secretary, Government of India in London about the recruitment in the army in Kashmir and Gorkha army in Nepal. He retorted back that contrary to the reports that the Kukas were losing credibility with the masses in Punjab, they were expanding to new areas. It was a serious matter and a serious action was being worked out against Nepal. Its Prime Minister Jang Bahadur however reported that only 16 Kuka Sikhs were recruited and all of them have been expelled. He withdrew the hand of friendship extended towards the Kukas. General Babbar Jung offered that if the British took action against the Kukas, the King of Nepal would personally help them.

Col. Mc Andrew, DIG Police, Ambala Circle wrote that "and

an attempt (by Satguru Ram Singh) has been made to set up a Regiment of his followers in the service of Maharaja of Kashmir and Kukas have been sent to Nepal with presents to the Government of the State. All this shows the working of an ambitious mind and from as small beginnings have sprung great results in the East. The efforts (by Guru Ram Singh) to install a group of followers in Kashmir and a similar attempt in Nepal, establishes that he was transgressing the authority of a Guru or a religious leader.”

Relations with Afghanistan:

Afghanistan is an important country in the North West of India. Dost Mohammad, an intelligent and a popular figure became Head of State in 1826 who was called Amir. The British were afraid of the growing Russian power becoming a potential danger through Afghanistan. They, therefore, wanted the Afghan ruler to be friendly with the British. Contrary to that, they found that Afghanistan had a Russian Ambassador.

In 1831, Governor General Auckland in consultation with Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab decided to appoint Shah Shuja as the Amir over throwing Dost Mohammad. The Maharaja, however did not allow passage to the beef eating British army fearing cow slaughter. A large British army, therefore travelled through Bahawalpur, Sindh, Balochistan and Bolan pass and proceeded towards Kabul (Afghanistan). Dost Mohammad fled Kabul fearing the sudden attack. The British crowned Shah Shuja on 7th August, 1839 and a 10,000 strong army was appointed for his safety. Dost Mohammad was surrounded, defeated and arrested. He was deported to Kolkatta and lodged in the jail along with other chieftains. But the British were caught in a surprise. Afghanistan revolted. The Maulvis issued a decree against Shah Shuja. A civil war broke out under the command of the elder son of Dost Mohammad Akbar Khan. The British army was killed in thousands. The rest had to surrender. As per the agreement, Dost Mohammad was released from jail and installed as the Amir. They had to pay a fine of six and a half lakhs. The British army was attacked by the nomads on its way back. Out of a 16,000 strong British army, only one person

WARRANT OF GURU RAM SINGH



No. 46

To

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF BRITISH BURMAH.

WHEREAS the Governor General in Council, for good and sufficient reasons, has seen fit to determine that

Ram Singh

shall be placed under personal restraint in British Burmah, you are hereby required and commanded, in pursuance of that determination, to receive the person abovesigned into your custody, and to deal with him in conformity to the orders of the Governor General in Council, and the provisions of Regulation III. of 1818.

By Order of the Governor General in Council,

Edw. 4/3/72

Secy. to the Govt. of India, in the Home Dept.

FORT WILLIAM;

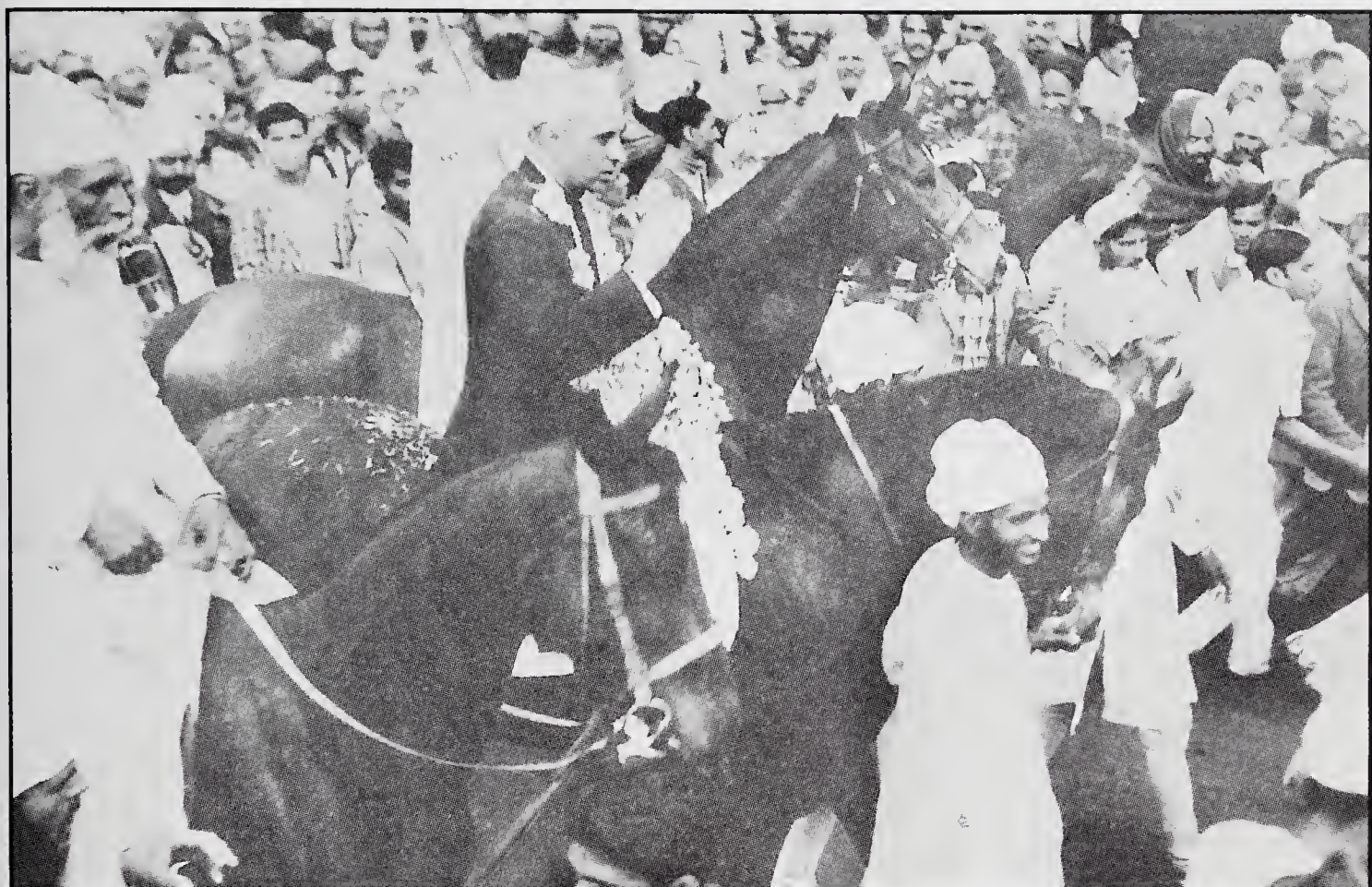
The 9 March 1872.

Warrant of Satguru Ram Singh issued by the British government.

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਪਸਾਦਿ। ਸਿਖ ਤੇਰਿ। ਪਾਸਿ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋਗਉ ਪਮਾਰਾਈ ਸਾ
ਉਤਿ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇਰੇ। ਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁਪਾਰੈ। ਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੇਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਧੰਨਾ ਸਿੰਘ
ਹੋਰ ਸੰਬਹਿ ਸੰਗਤ ਕੇ। ਸਿਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤੇ ਬੁਲਾਈ। ਪਮਾਨ ਕਰਹਿ
ਮਾਈ ਬੀਬੀ ਕੇ। ਰਾਮ ਸਤਿ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਪਸੀਆਨੇ। ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਸਾਹੀ
ਸੰਗਤ ਕੇ ਸੁਖੀਆਨੇ। ਰਖੇ ਏਹੁ ਸੰਗਤੇ। ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਤੇ। ਅਗੇ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨਰਾਏ।
ਹੋਰ ਜੀ ਜਿਸ ਜਿਸ ਸਰੀਰੇ। ਕਹੈ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਏਹੁ ਦੁਖ ਹੈ ਏਹੁ ਦੁਖ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਸਰੇ। ਹੀ ਦੁਖ ਕ
ਇਜਾਉ ਗਾਢੁ ਹੀ ਦੁਖ ਸੀਨ ਪਾਤ, ਮਿਰਗੀ ਬੀਰਤ, ਬੀਰੇ ਬੀਰੇ ਜੇ ਮਾਨਖ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਖ ਦੁਖ
ਕੇਰੈ ਹੋਰ ਬੀਰੇ ਨੰਗ ਕੁ, ਖਕਾ ਦੁਖ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਸਾਰਾਈ ਦੁਖ ਪਮੇਸ ਦੇ ਕੁਜਲ ਤੇ ਕਇਜਾਉ
ਗਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਸਬਰੇ ਗਕਾ ਅਭਿਖ ਦੁਨਾਮੁ ਸੇ ਜੀ ਨਾਮ ਦਾ ਤੇ ਬਾਈ ਪਨੁਨਦ
ਏਹੁ ਬਡਾ ਮਹਤ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਟਾਪ ਹਿਰਾਤ ਤੇ ਪਹਰੇ ਉਠੇ। ਹਮੇਸਾ ਸਨਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਬਾਈ ਪਨੁਨ
ਫੇਰ ਕੁਜਲ ਕਰਨਾ। ਦਿਨਾਨ ਕੰਮ ਕਾਰ ਮੈ ਜੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਦੇ। ਅਰੁ ਜਥਾ ਸਕਤ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਕੁ
ਕ੍ਰਿਸੇਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਬੀਚੀ ਜਚ ਕਣੀ ਚੁਰਾਉ। ਨਾ ਪਰ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਾਤ ਨਾ ਉਦਾਸ ਰਹੁ ਸਾਰੇਈ
ਸਰਿ ਦੇ ਦੁਖ ਕਇਜਾ ਫਗੇ ਏਹੁ ਸਕੇ ਕੇ ਸਟਾ ਦੇ ਫਾਹੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਾਈ ਸਾਉ। ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਤੈਲਿ ਖਾਥੇ
ਨਸਾਨਾ ਟਿਗੇ ਏਸੇ ਸਾਨੁ ਖਬਾਨ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਅਗੇ ਜੋ ਕੀ ਪੇਟ ਏਹੈ ਤਾਨੀ ਤੈਲੁ ਜਬਾਬੁ ਲਿਖਾਉ
ਖਬਲ ਗੀ ਹੈ ਸਾਨੁ ਬੇਨੇ ਦਿਨੇ ਹੋਏ। ਨਦੇਈ ਨਸਾਨਾ ਮੀਗੇ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਦੋਏ। ਅਗਲੀ ਮੀ
ਗੀ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੁਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਦਾਸ ਮਾਹੈ ਹੁਇ। ਪਾਇਆ ਅਗੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੀਤੁ, ਹੈ ਪਾਪੇ ਕਾਏ ਨਾ ਪਾਪੇ
ਜੀ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਏਹੁ ਹੁਕਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ। ਲਿਖਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਮੈ ਲਿਖਾ ਹੈ। ਹੋਰ ਜੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਮੈ ਕੀ
ਲਿਖੇ ਹੈ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਮੇ ਤਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇਈ ਲਿਖੇ ਦੇਖ ਲੈ ਦੇ ਜਿਨ ਦੇਖੇ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਦਿਮਾਨੇ ਹੈ
ਇਮਾਨੇ ਬਾਨੇ ਦੇਖੇ ਦਾ ਫੁਲਾਇ ਦਾਨੀ ਹੋ ਦਾ ਦੇਈ ਤਾ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਾਖੀ ਪਠੇ।
ਸਮਾਹ ਗੁਏ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਮੈ ਸਾਰੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਕੇ। ਪਹੁਸਾਰੇ ਕੇ ਖਾਕੇ ਜਾਤ ਕੇ ਪਹੁਸਾਰੇ। ਸਾਰੀ ਸੰ
ਗਤ ਦੇ ਬਾਸ ਤੇ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਭੇਜ ਦਿਤੇ ਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸ ਪਰੇ ਪਏ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ ਦੇਖੇ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸੇ ਦੇਖ ਲੈ ਦੇ
ਖੇਈ ਹੈ ਨਕਾਮੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਖ ਲੈ ਫਗੇ ਤਾਨੀ ਇਕੁ ਚਟਿਲ ਉਇਕੁ। ਪਮੇ ਹੁਗਾ। ਹੋਰ ਜੀ
ਨਾਮ ਗਾਮ ਸਰੇ ਲਿਖੇ। ਪਉਖੇ ਹੈ ਸਕੇ ਸਿਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤੇ ਬੁਲਾਈ।
ਕੁਜਲ ਬਾਈ ਕਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਸਕੇ ਸਟਾ ਦੇ ਫਾਹੇ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਾਤ ਨਾ ਏਕੇ ਜੋ ਕੁਜਲ ਕਰ ਗਾਓ ਸਦਾ
ਸਾਰਾ ਦੁਖ ਕਇਜਾਉ ਗਾਏ। ਬੇਸਾਨੁ ਬੀਬਨਾ ਦੁਖ ਹੋ। ਪਾਥਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਤਨੁ ਫਦਾ ਸੀਰਾਤ
ਦਿਨ ਜਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਤੇ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਾਤ ਨਾ ਕੇ ਕੁਜਲ ਬਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਲਗੇ। ਸੇ ਦਿਨ ਤੇ ਠੰਢ ਬਤ ਗਈ ਸਾਨੁ
ਅਰੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਬੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਾਤ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਦਾ ਬਡਾਈ ਮਹਤਾਮ ਲਿਖਾ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨਾ
ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗਾਓ ਸਨੁ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਖੈ ਉਗਾਥਿ। ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਮੈ ਦੇਖ ਲੈ ਉਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪੁ
ਤ ਪਾਸਈ ਬੈਠੇ ਰਹੇ। ਹੋਰ ਗਾਥਾਈ ਪਾਗਦ ਜੀ ਨਾ ਮਿਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਥਾਂ ਦੇਖੀ ਨਾ ਪਗੇ ਦਾਤ, ਦਾਸ ਮੇ
ਹਰੀ ਮੇਹਤ ਬੈਠੇ ਰਹੇ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸ ਕੋ ਗਈ ਮਿਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਥਾਂ ਦੇਖੀ ਦੇਖੁ ਨਾ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੀਸੇ ਜੀ ਬਿ
ਨਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਮੈ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਮੈ ਦੇ ਪਾਸ ਨਾ ਵੀ ਫੁਲੁ ਸੁਖ ਨਹੀ ਹੋਦਾ।

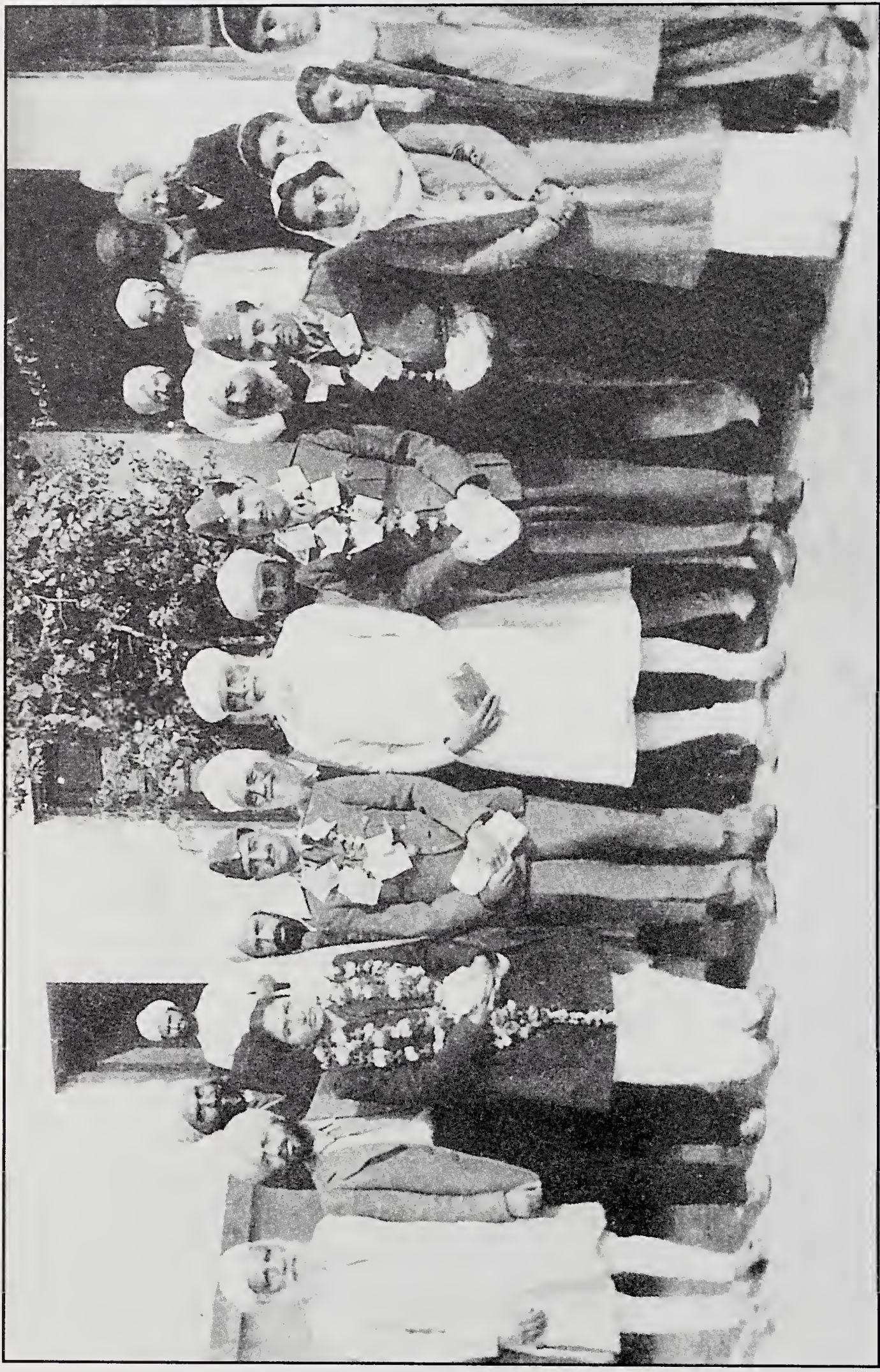
Two written commands (Hukamnamas) were seized from Dhanna Singh of Gumati near the bungalow of Satguru Ram Singh in Rangoon in 1880 which he had received from the Satguru. These two original hand written commands are preserved in the Naional Archives, New Delhi.



Satguru Partap Singh and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru leading a protest demonstration by State Peoples Conference, 1939



Satguru Partap Singh with leaders of India's War of Independence Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Master Tara Singh, Saifuddin Kitchlu, Maulana Habibullah and others at Sri Bhaini Sahib in 1939.



Satguru Partap Singh welcoming Azad Hind Fauz (Indian National Army) Col. Shah Niwaz, Capt. G.S. Dhillon and Capt. Sehgal after their release by a military court in 1945.

could reach Jalalabad to tell the tales of woe. Some British army men were imprisoned in Kabul.

Enraged Lord Auckland did not take a lesson from it and despatched a large army under Col. Polak and General Naught's command. The British again had to retreat, losing more lives and nearly 20,000 white people were killed and they also suffered heavy monetary losses. Shah Shuja was also killed. Auckland had to eat a humble pie. He was recalled to England. All those who succeeded him as Governor General, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Dalhausie and Lord Canning, who was appointed Viceroy in 1857 instead of Governor General, Viceroys Lord Algin, Lord Lawrence, Lord Meo and Lord North Brooke dare not tease the Afghans again. They followed a policy of masterly inactivity. Even though, they were concerned over the growing Russian influence in Central Asia, yet they did not think it proper to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

A war of succession began among the 16 sons of Amir Dost Mohammad in 1863 after his death. His three sons Afzal, Azian and Sher Ali made it a question of their prestige. Sher Ali became the Amir in 1864 but he was defeated in Kabul and Kandhar by Afzal khan who became the Amir in 1866. After his death in October 1867, his younger brother Azim Khan was crowned but the very next year, Sher Ali's son Yakub Khan defeated Abdur Rehman and became the Amir of Kabul. All the Viceroys in India always remained on the side of the winner and did not stick loyal to anyone. This policy of theirs was like a fun to the chieftains and landlords. Therefore, they extended a hand of friendship to anti-British regimes, including Russia.

The Kukas were never faithful to the British. As a matter of fact, they extended a hand of friendship towards Afghanistan. Baba Kishan Singh, a learned Pandit was a scholar of Pushto, Persian and Sanskrit. He went to Afghanistan. A few Sikh families, followers of Guru Nanak were staying there. He spent time with them. He was also able to call on Amir Sher Ali and exchanged views with him. The Babaji discussed about the Kuka movement,

its living standards and aims and objectives and urged the Amir to help in India's independence struggle.

Amir's sons Yakub Khan and Abdul Khan visited India to know more about the political conditions and the Kuka movement. They visited Bhaini Sahib, exchanged views with the Satguru and went back. The British came to know about their visit but could not get a word on what transpired at the meeting.

Interaction with Russia:

Baba Bishan Singh and Baba Gurcharan Singh were deeply anguished and anxious to free India from the foreign yoke. They visited Afghanistan and beyond it, Samarkandh. A Russian intellectual Minaiev visited India for a study on Buddhism. He wrote about the Kukas: 'Many Kukas in Ludhiana believe in prophesy that Russia will come to help India in throwing away the yoke of slavery.'⁴

Baba Chanda Singh writes:

“the Russian army attacked India
creating all round mourning in London
the British also moved their armies
daily wars broke out
sons of wailing mothers were killed
widowed daughter-in laws lamented in grief.”⁵

(Baramah)

Russia became active in Afghanistan after 1872. Details about it would appear in the following pages at an appropriate place.

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PROTECTOR OF THE COW

INDIA LIVES IN villages, since ages. Farming has been the main profession in the villages. The oxen pulled the farmer's plough, yoke and the cart. But in deserts, the camel had replaced the oxen. Oxen is cow's progeny but the cow provides more milk to the humankind than its own progeny. Its excreta, skin and leather are useful to the man. Cow is traditionally worshipped and reared in India for this very reason. But the Christians and Muslims do not worship the cow. They killed the cow and traded in its leather and bones.

When the Muslims attacked and mowed down India, they trampled and killed the cow, pundits and the poor. Guru Nanak lamented, 'why cow and the pundits are suffering?'

After occupation of the country, the followers of Prophet Mohammad:

‘demolished temples and raised mosques
committed sin by killing the cow and the poor.’¹

(Bhai Gurdas)

Guru Gobind Singh, the plume bearer raised his sword in protection of the poor and the cow. He invoked the Goddess of Power to help him in:

“Allow me to finish the Turkish
to end the cow slaughter from the world.”²

His followers fought many wars in Punjab to banish the Turks and sacrificed. As a result, Punjab banned cow slaughter. In the words of Dr. Fauza Singh:

“The Muslims in Punjab had also not used cow meat since about three-fourth of a century.”³

(Kuka Movement)

Cow slaughter was strictly banned in the territories under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The killer of the cow was given death penalty. But the rapidly expanding British traders, who had conquered under the garb of trading with the might of the sword, carried the vice of cow slaughter, wherever they went. Afraid of the growing influence of Russia and Afghanistan extending a hand of friendship to him, the British requested Maharaja Ranjit Singh for helping them in installing their stooge Shah Suja as the Amir of Afghanistan in 1838. The three, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the British and Shah Shuja-ul-Haq entered into an agreement on 26th June 1838. Clause 10 of the agreement said, “when ever the armies of the two countries were together at one place, under no circumstances, cow slaughter would be permitted at that place.”²⁴

(Sikh History – Jojeph David Cunningham)

The Maharaja died in 1839 to the misfortune of the Punjabis. The British captured Lahore following the civil war that broke out and the British-Sikh war. John Henry Lawrence was appointed the Resident.

An unfortunate incident happened on 21st April, 1846. A Caretaker at the artillery attacked a herd of cows and injured many cows. Enraged, the people in the city went on a strike. Henry Lawrence came to pacify them. He was attacked by the people with brickbats from roof-tops. This made him furious and he took a cruel revenge. Several people were arrested. Dutt Pandit and Rullia Pandit were given death penalty. Two others were externed from the British ruled areas. Two others were taken round the city, hand and feet cuffed and with their faces blackened. People were terrified which made it easy for the British to indulge in cow slaughter.

The writing on a copper plate at the gate of the Harimandir Sahib issued under the name of the Resident forbade anybody visiting the temple with shoes on and banned cow slaughter to maintain sanctity of the city. But it said nothing about the rest of Punjab. Its interpretation was taken as positive for allowing cow slaughter in the rest of Punjab.

Killing of cow and eating beef was to instigate the beef-eater Muslims to think otherwise than the Hindu Sikh unity. It was meant to create a wedge in the relations between the Muslims and the Hindus and to challenge the self respect of the Hindus as well as the Sikhs.

Nobody dare raise his voice after Punjab came under the British rule on 29th March, 1849. The white were the masters of Punjab. Prof. Kirpal Singh Kasel writes about their policy:

“Cow slaughter was allowed in rest of the Punjab (except Amritsar). The imperialist policy of the British ‘Divide and Rule’ had become the most appropriate tool to rule over the people during that historic period. The foreign government’s policy to encourage a wedge in the relations between the Hindu-Sikh and the Muslims was behind it.”⁵

(History Sant Khalsa Part I)

Dr.Fauja Singh wrote:

“From 1846 onwards it was a calculated policy of the British to drive a wedge between Muslims and non-Muslims and to win the former’s goodwill.”⁶

Under these dirty game plans and on instructions from the Governor General, cow slaughter was allowed in Punjab. However, the Commissioner of Lahore wrote to Deputy Commissioner Montgomery that the cows should be killed outside the city and cow meat should not be sold openly at shops in towns and cities to avoid hurting the feelings of the Hindus.

On 10th May, 1849, Governor General Lord Dalhausie issued another order saying that: “Nobody would be allowed to interfere in the faith and tradions of a neighbour.” It was, in fact a licence for cow slaughter and open sale of cow meat at every place.

Deputy Commissioner M.C. Saunders allowed opening of butchery outside Lahori Gate in a bid to open Amritsar, the great pilgrimage centre of the Hindus and Sikhs to the cow killers and its

meat sellers. But, he put a mild condition of not selling the cow meat by hawkers in streets and to carry the meat fully covered from one place to another. It was like dusting the turnips.

Amritsar had half of its population of Hindus and the other half that of Muslims. There were hardly any Sikhs. They were Arora shopkeepers or daily waged masons and carpenters.

With the increase in cow slaughter, Amritsar had become a trading centre for raw skins. Not only cows, well built oxen were slaughtered to get good price. The traders minted money.

At a time when the Hindu-Sikh rich merchants, feudal estate holders, managers and other well-to-do people flaunted the sentiments of the people, hurt at the cow slaughter, the Muslim Non-Muslim riots broke out. People knocked at the doors of courts. Some examples:

1. A case came up in the Court of D.C. Amritsar on the 20th May, 1849.
2. On 7th May, 1858, a case was produced in the Court of F. Cooper, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar against selling uncovered meat.
- 3 & 4. Cases came up in the Court of Major Mercer on 28th May, 1863 and in the Court of J.W. Macnabb in November, 1864.

The Muslim point of view became stronger as these cases were decided in their favour. They openly sold cow meat in Mohallas and streets. If at all, a lower court gave punishment or imposed fine, a superior court let it off. In 1867, the Committee raised its coffers by taxing every slaughtered head. This increased tension. An average citizen was greatly aggrieved. In the words of M.M. Ahluwalia:

“The innocent, illiterate and religious-minded people of the Punjab found a new picture of ugliness and loss in the holy city of Amritsar which completely differed from the picture of those days when Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors ruled Lahore.”⁷

(Kukas)

In view of the growing tension due to cow slaughter in the entire country, the Lt. Governor, Punjab in a note dated 8th April, 1869 wrote about the Civil Services examination that:

“Like the meat stricken cartridges, the protest against the cow slaughter can engulf the entire country in violence just in a month. As the British were themselves beef eaters, they instigated Muslims for cow slaughter so that tension escalated between the Hindus and the Muslims.”

The situation became so tense that in 1871, it culminated into Hindu-Sikh riots on 3rd April. Baba Bir Singh Naurangabadi's attendant Bhai Deva Singh was shocked to see a cow bone while going round the Darbar Sahib in reverence. He placed it before the Adi Garanth Sahib and Dasam Garanth Sahib in Harimandir Sahib and questioned about the sanctity and the self respect of the complex. When a report about this incident reached the government, he was imprisoned for three years on charges of breach of peace.

The butchery in the city was set up at a place near clock tower and its east wall was common with Harimandir Sahib. Crows and eagles, etc. picked up bones and morsels of meat as a matter of routine and flew in the sky overhead. Some of these carnivorous birds used to prick and eat meat from the bones sitting over the pinnacles, spreading the residual in the round about of Harimandir Sahib. On seeing these ramanants, people used to be highly dejected. In the words of Nahar Singh:

“Bhai Ardaman Singh Raagi was the leader of the Sikhs in the city who used to be drunk while delivering religious discourses in the holy presence of Sri Guru Garanth Sahib. Others whether they were priests, reciters of the holy-scriptures, prayer sayers, land lords or paid servants were all self centred. The city had only a handful population of the Sikhs. There were Aroras who used to earn their livelihood as shopkeepers. About five to seven Nihang Sikhs who used to live in Baba Phoola Singh dome, led a carefree self centered life, paying scant regard for the happenings surrounding

them. Occasionally, a Nihang Sikh, in isolation called the Muslims by the bad name 'Turkish' which often led to exchange of hot words. None of them, however had enough courage to do something to relieve the people of the outrageous behaviour of Muslim butchers."⁸ (Namdhari History)

The Kuka movement launched by Satguru Ram Singh was at its peak. He was a staunch believer in the Indian values and traditions and at the same time was bitterly opposed to the British who had forcibly subjugated India. He was not unaware of the colossal loss the nation was suffering because of the treacherous policies of the British. He was in no doubt about the butcheris:

"These butchers have come from a foreign land (London)
they have set up butcheries
I am deeply aggrieved at the killing of the cows
Oh Sikhs of the Lord
time has come to sacrifice our lives."⁹

(Baramah – Chanda Singh)

He was particularly upset over the existence of the butchery in Amritsar. The Diwali festival of 1867 held under the supervision of Satguru Ram Singh had left a deep imprint on the minds of the people. In this festival, a mason by profession, Baba Lahina Singh Panav engaged himself in service alongwith the other Kukas. He used to carry Namdhari post from one place to the other.

In 1871, Sant Beehila Singh, Hakim Singh Patwari, Mehar Singh Thatta, Bhagwan Singh Marahna among others had a sitting at Lahina Singh Panav's residence on one night when his wife was away to see her parents. Somebody in the gathering commented about the existence of butcheries in Amritsar and said that "these Turks would have to be set right as at the instigation of the government, they never hesitated from killing the cows." This issue became a matter of serious deliberations. Soon, a do or die group of about 10 Sikhs was formed. Sepoy Lal Singh sneaked away a few swords from the weaponry to arm the group. Battle axes were sharpened.

The group attempted an attack on the night of 12th June, 1871 but had to hastily retreat as the dogs began barking. Sant Dalip Singh, the great grandson of Babaji revealed that on the 14th June, 1871, on the Puranmashi festival day in the first half of the month of Jetha (third month of the Indian calendar) prayer was recited at the sacred fire praying the Almighty to end the cruelty befalling the cow and release of all those put behind the bars and to wipe out the barbarians. They prayed the Almighty for giving courage to the Khalsa to fight, sacrifice and win the battle. As per the chalked out programme, the Sikhs attacked the butchery near the clock tower in the dead of night in order to protect the sanctity of the Harimandir Sahib and to defeat the British policy of cow slaughter. They fed the dogs put on the vigil to calm them down and the Sikhs opened the gates and released the cows tied to the tether. On hearing the noise, the butchers woke up from their slumber. They attacked with their weapons used for cow slaughter but the Sikhs gave them a bitter fight. Some butchers were killed while some others were injured and many others retreated to save their lives. After releasing the cows, the valiant Sikhs proceeded to the Bhagtanwala gate. No one followed them. There were about one hundred brown, white and mixed coloured cows and their progeny. After releasing the cows, the Sikhs hid their blood stained clothes and their weapons at a safe place and set on different routes.

Next day, on the 15th June, 1871 this news spread like a wild fire. Peera, Jiuna, Shaadi and Imami were killed in the fighting. Karamdeen, Ilahi Bukhsh and Kheev were seriously injured and were saved with timely medicare.

This terrified the Muslims who felt the action was because of the misdoings of their fellow brethren. The butchers were so terrified that they discontinued butchering. Hindus and Sikhs were highly elated that at least there were some dare devils who had put an end to the religiously hurting wrong practice.

The government came into action. The Deputy Commissioner took a special interest. A renowned, efficient and cunning Police Superintendent of Hoshiarpur-Jalandhar Mr. Christi

(known for his great detective skills) proceeded to Amritsar on 24th June 1871 for an investigation. He was assisted by Police Inspector, Hoshiarpur Fazal Hussain, Deputy Inspector Dogar Mal, Attar Singh, Surjan Singh, Maia Singh Sargeant and eight sepoy. They set up their office at a place away from the city Kotwali. An award of one thousand rupees was announced for anybody giving information about the killings. Government faithfuls, stooges, Raja Sahib Dayal, Mangal Singh Ramgarhia, Bhagwan Singh, Rai Moola Singh and Khan Mohammad Shah were specially asked for their help into the investigations.

Shah Mohammad Khan was an extreme habitual drunkard and a bad character. The immoral profligate enticed Nihal Singh, Gurmukh Singh and Kahan Singh in finding out the killers of persons of his religion. They bragged that they were the killers. Peeved at this, no one came forward to claim the responsibility. This trick, therefore, did not work.

During the investigations, it was found out that a report dated 20th June, 1871 by Peer Bukhsh had stated that one Heera Singh Bhatra had taken several rounds of the butchery secretly. He was called and thrashed mercilessly and was not allowed to sleep for days together. Bhagwan Singh gave the witness that he was a known bad character. On further torture, he broke down and confessed to the killing of butchers. Police was convinced that he was speaking the truth.

He named Yahia, a bad character. He also confessed to the crime under severe beating. He named Seth Jairam. All three turned approvers and the enquiry went on. Though the Deputy Commissioner was not convinced, the enquiry went ahead. Several other innocent Nihangs were also arrested. The investigations were completed on 20th July 1871 and proceedings initiated in the court of the district Magistrate on 21st July. Based on the evidence given by eye witnesses and the heresay, 12 persons were declared guilty. They were: Sant Ram, Ram Kishan, Manna Singh Nihang, Jawala Singh, Panna ji, Moola, Nihal Singh, Maia, Sunder Singh, Bhup Singh, Teka and Shoba.

The Magistrate Mr. Birch referred the case to the Deputy Commissioner who after authentication forwarded it to the Session Judge. The entire government machinery was happy that truth had come out and they would get awards and promotions. The Muslims and the British were happy that they got justice. But the families of the 12 innocents declared guilty treacherously were in great despair.

The cow protection incident had happened at Raikot on 15th July 1871. The Satguru stationed at Bhaini Sahib was worried that the innocents might be hanged, which would amount to punishing the poor innocents. One day, Baba Lahina Singh and Beehila Singh prayed before the Satguru that their conscience pricked but they had to resort to taking the extreme step. They said the incident had happened and begged to be excused.

Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal writes that the Satguru told them: “The Satguru ordained the Sikhs involved in the incident to admit and sacrifice their lives. In their death they would assimilate with the Guru.”¹⁰

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

They abide by the Satguru and started searching for their accomplices. They came to know that Mehar Singh Lopoke had gone to Kabul. Jhanda Singh Thatta and Lachhman Singh were also out of reach. All others reported one day at the Sessions Judge court of Major W.G. Davies at peak noon time and loudly shouted the traditional Sikh salutation. All of them were wearing white religious robes and strings of woolen beads adorning straight tied turbans. The Judge stopped his work and asked them the reason for barging into the court room. They said:

- “1. They were Kuka Sikhs, followers of Satguru Ram Singh.
2. Kukas never tell a lie.
3. They were not the faithfuls of the British government.
4. They were the protectors of cows, the poor, their traditions and their sanctity.
5. They had come to challenge the false judgement

6. They had killed the butchers to force closing down of butcheries.
7. Do not hang the innocents; do whatever the authorities can do with them.”

The case was reopened for investigations. Renowned detective Christi had to eat the humble pie. The government found an eye witness. On 1st August 1871, Gulab Singh was ordered to be hanged in the Raikot case. Deputy Inspector General Col. Baillie called him in and on 2nd August, he pin pointed the killers, whom he had never seen before. He gave a government dictated statement. The final hearing in the case was held on 7th August 1871. The Magistrate gave his verdict, as follows:

To be hanged : Baba Lahina Singh son on Musadda Singh, Beehila Singh Sandhu Naarli, Hakam Singh Patwari, Mohrhe, Fateh Singh Bhatrha, Shopkeeper

To be externed to Andaman & Nicobar islands: Sepoy Lal Singh and Lahina Singh son of Blaka Singh

Declared absconders: Mehar Singh Lopoke, Jhanda Singh Thatta and Lachhman Singh Chahal

Bhagwan Singh Arhbangi, Marahna and Lahina Singh Lopoke were suspected to be associated with the case but no comment was made about them.

The case was finally sent to Sessions Judge W.G. Davies for the award of punishment. Ranjodh Singh, Balmukund and Khan Gulab Kader were also forced to confess to the guilt. On 4th September, the Chief Court, Panjab affirmed the punishment given to the Sikhs and on 11th September Justice C.R. Lindsey confirmed it. The four hardcore nationalists were ordered to be hanged in public on the banyan tree at Ram Bagh on Majitha road on 15th September 1871. The last wish of the Sikhs was:

1. A bath in the sacred pond at Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar.
2. To be hanged by putting a silken string around the neck instead of the cow skin strand.

3. No executioner should touch them and their faces should not be covered.

The brave, even made a mockery of the death, beating the small drums put around their necks and ringing cymbals. They recited:

“Oh protector of the helpless, we beseech your blessings
oh my lord, there is eternal bliss in it.”

Reciting this couplet, they reached the Banyan tree and embraced death, living a full life. Hakam Singh Patwari's widowed mother pulled down the roof of her house and collected wooden bars used for supporting the roof top. In consultation with the relatives of the three other martyrs, all four bodies were collectively consigned to flames.

Jhanda Singh Thatta was arrested on 11th August 1873 and was executed the very next day after processing a case against him.

Sant Ram and 11 others were released on 9th August 1871 on finding not guilty.

Baganwala Incident

The British rulers opened butchery in Simla to satisfy their appetite and fun and frolic. Simla was the summer capital and their resting place. The cows were acquired from Ambala for this butchery. The Sikhs decided to save the cows and teach a lesson to the butchers. Some Sikhs left Bhaini Sahib in July 1871 without informing the Satguru. They included Attar Singh Hazuria of Kartargarh, Attar Singh from Kotha village, Kahna from Kamalpur, Dhaunkal Singh from Raipur and Thaman Singh of Dugri. They reached Lalli at night. On way, they passed through Bhari via Seh where Lal Singh presented them two swords after knowing their intentions. Sardar Partap Singh of Khamanon also presented one sword. They sharpened the swords and reached Chunni village as the night fell. There Baba Sudh Singh advised them to go back but they remained firm in their zeal and in their decision. They remained firm in their determination to set the Simla butchers right.

The Sikhs reached Baganwala. The river was in high spate due to heavy rain, dampening their spirits. Just as they were planning to go back, a security guard asked them in a loud voice who they were and what were they doing? The Sikhs replied that they had come from Simla and were on their way home. He was not satisfied and asked them either to stay there for the night or accompany him to the police station. He also raised an alarm calling them thieves. The Sikhs offered him two rupees to keep quiet but as his wheel of time did not allow him to accept the offer, he ran after the fleeing Sikhs. Attar Singh struck him on the left shoulder with his sword and killed him on the spot.

The river in front of them was in spate. They left behind their small pitcher like metal vessels, coarse raw silk clothes and sheaths and jumped into the river. As they were climbing the banks, after crossing the river, a Turk hit Attar Singh with a heavy baton. He was surrounded by the enemies. Thaman Singh cut the hand of a Turk with his sword and got the Sikh released. All of them walked hastily.

The horde cried hoarsely 'they have killed' and followed them. The sky was overcast and when lightening struck from the clouds, the Muslims saw the shining swords in the hands of the Sikhs and retreated in fear.

This incident happened on 20-22 Asad (4th month of Hindu calendar) 1928 Bikrami Samvat (5-7 July 1871). The sheaths gave a trail to Partap Singh but the police could not find out anything. He was tried in Ambala court on 8th July. Jaimal Singh and Harnam Singh were also challaned with him. Harnam Singh known as 'mare killer' was questioned over the case known as Morinda case. He was asked whether he had killed a person in Baganwala and with whose permission. Where from did he get the sword? He replied the judge firmly, "Yes, I have killed a person. You gave me the sword and you ordered that he be killed." The ruler declared him insane and ordered him to be released. Partap Singh and Jaimal Singh were also released in the absence of evidence against them.

Kahna turned a contemptuous approver in the Raikot case. Attar Singh and Thaman singh of Kotha village went underground and reached Nepal. The government machinery did not consider this as the outrage against the Muslims or the butchers but held it as anti government activity.

Raikot Incident

The incident at Amritsar was in Majha and that of Baganwala in Puadh. The government opened butchery in Raikot also to instigate the butchers and disgrace religious places. The city was founded by Rai Mohammad. His son Rai Kalla was a follower of Guru Gobind Singh. It was he who had deputed Nura Mahi to get the news of martyrdom of the younger Sahibzadas (Two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh) from Sirhind. The Satguru had presented him with a *garba*, a sword and a rail as a memento. The jug was made in such fine workmanship that sand could pass through its small holes but not the water. The Satguru had once taken rest there after crossing the Machhiwara jungle. Gurudwara Tahliana was constructed at that spot in reverence.

The free for all allowed by the East India Company for cow slaughter was reaching the smaller cities and towns also. The permission to open butchery at Raikot was given by an officer of Ludhina district named Rickets in 1856. It was but natural that Governor General Lord Canning approved it. They opened the butchery away from the city but it was nearer the Gurudwara. A mendicant group resided nearby but they were also helpless. A pond was also in the vicinity.

Ranjha and Buta butchers deliberately instigated the Sikh devotees. They carried uncovered beef in baskets. Crows and dogs carried meat morsels, pieces and bones and pricked these. Sitting on the dome of the Dera, its walls and roof tops, other birds also pricked meat pieces. Same was the situation in the Gurudwara. The residents, priests, granthis and the sevadars were all perplexed. They used to scare away the birds and sigh in grief. The butchers enjoyed their helplessness. Without thinking that animals take water

from the pond, they used to throw away cow Skelton into it. They knew that the British government was with them and no one even dared raise a finger against them.

One day, some Sikhs halted for the night at *Suthrian Di Dharamshala* (mendicants' inn) while on their way to Bhaini Sahib to have a glimpse of the Satguru. They found the surroundings impure, foul smelling and detestable. Gurmukh Singh and Mastan Singh of village Patho from among the group wanted to know more about the situation. They were told that the government had allowed the opening of the nearby butchery. Ranjha and a bad character by the name Heera butchers were pranksters. They did not care even for a prosperous Hindu Khatri or a Sikh. The residents lamented that only Satguru can teach them a lesson, they were helpless.

The Sikhs went to Chhini from Raikot and called on Dal Singh. Some more Sikhs joined them. They felt that they were from the Malwa area and if people belonging to Majha took some action there, it would be a disgrace for the Malwa residents. They decided to set the butchers right and save the cows. Next day, the first day of the fifth month of the Indian calendar (Saravana month) on 15th July 1871, they reached Tajpur in Buta Ram Dera. They lit the holy fire and distributed the sacrosanct food. They included Suba Giani Singh alias Rattan Singh Mandi and Rattan Singh Naiwala.

It was a day of torrential rain but still about eight Sikhs, who did not include Suba Rattan Singh and Rattan Singh Mardi proceeded to Raikot. As the night fell, it was pitch dark because of overcast sky. They knocked at the door of the butchery and said they were travelers. When the door was opened, they attacked the inmates with swords and sharp knives. Three Sikhs stood guard at the gate and five others attacked with swords and sharp knives. They cut the ropes tied round the necks of the cows and set them free.

Nearby Hindu Sikh residents were happy at the plight of the

butchers. A police station was also in the vicinity but its authorities felt that let the calm prevail thereafter they would go for investigations. The Sikhs, after accomplishing their task, vanished in the darkness. They proceeded to Chhini. On the way, they took bath at a well, changed their robes, hid their arms and went each other's way. It all happened for two or two and a half hours from eleven in the night.

The Station House Officer reached the spot while it was still dark to take action, restore peace and save the injured. He found out that Dasaundhi Gujjar and his wife Bassi were killed. Seven persons, including women and a child were injured. The child died on the third day. Ranjha had fled the place jumping from the roof top. Heera also escaped the wrath of the Sikhs.

Because of rain and storm, the lamps could not be lit hampering investigations. It was difficult to follow the trail of the Sikhs in the rain and slush. The action, therefore, could start only in the morning of 16th July 1871. With the help of trained *Khoje* (spies) Bhanga and Bhupa, it was established that eight persons had gone towards Chhiniwal. Thereafter, two of them had gone towards Nabha state and six towards Patiala state.

The incident had happened in Ludhiana district. Deputy Commissioner L. Cowan reached the spot immediately. He asked for help from Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala. The King of Nabha Bhagwan Singh had died in 1871 without a descendant. Therefore, the British were ruling the state. Cowan announced an award of one thousand rupees for anybody giving the clue about the incident. Maharaja Patiala also announced an award of 250 rupees.

Many people became unduly active in the greed for awards and to take revenge against their adverseries. Gadaiya named a Hindu merchant, Gazi Muslim Gujjar from Nurpur named Nanak Khatri, Lahina Singh Nihang from Anandpur Sahib named Kukas, Harnam Singh and Sunder Singh named Satguru Ram Singh. Cawan absolved Satguru Ram Singh of the charge after Superintendent of Police Ambala district called the statement of

Harnam Singh and Sunder Singh as baseless, false and undelievable. The report said others were also named because of jealousy and enmity.

Nothing happened till 20th July. Dal Singh of Chhiniwal confessed under duress and the greed for award. He was with the Sikh group. Swords were recovered at his instance and he disclosed the names of Mangal Singh, Mastan Singh and Gurmukh Singh Pitho. His wife Ramo turned a witness. Attar Singh Pitho, a 10-12 year old son of Kahan Singh Kamalpur was also arrested. Suba Rattan Singh was arrested from Khanna and Gulab Singh from Chuharhchak. Except the small boy, all others were chained and taken to Bassian Kothi. They were presented before a court. The Satguru had to appear in the court on 24th July 1871. He reached there alongwith 36 Kuka Subas and other prominent persons. He denied any information about the incident and also denied giving money to anybody for the purpose.

Sessions Judge J. W. Macnabb awarded death penalty to Gurmukh Singh, Mangal Singh, Mastan Singh and Gulab Singh on 27th July 1871 based on the witnesses of Ramo and one eyed Daloo. Judge C. Boulenois of Chief Court, Panjab approved the punishment and Justice J.S. Campbell confirmed it. They were ordered to be executed on 5th August 1871 at Bassian near Raikot.

The authorities however later realized that in the Amritsar case a positive eye witness was needed. Gulab Singh (Gulaboo) turned approver and agreed to stand as eye witness. After talking to him, Col Baillie reported to Amritsar that Gulab Singh will stand witness against the Kukas.

Apart from Mangal Singh, Mastan Singh and Gurmukh Singh, Suba Rattan Singh and Rattan Singh Naiwala were imprisoned in Ludhiana jail on 28th July, 1871.

According to Nidhan Singh Alam, after the death penalty was confirmed, "the beloved Sikhs of the Satguru were hanged at a tree near Bassian Kothi on 5th August 1871."

(Jug Paltaoo Satguru)

Martyrdom of Suba Rattan Singh and Rattan Singh Naiwala

The British government might not have gained anything from the attacks by the Sikhs on the butcheries at Amritsar and Raikot and by giving them death penalties but it got three hardcore positive witnesses Daloo, Ramo and Gulaboo to stand by it. They stood firm in spitting venom against the Satguru and the Kukas as also against the Suba Giani Rattan Singh son of Ram Kishan of village Mandi and Rattan Singh son of Budh Singh village Naiwala which led to their execution.

Both Rattans were charged with instigating the Sikhs to kill the butchers at Raikot and for giving eight swords to them. They were charged that the Satguru had sent them from Bhaini Sahib and gave them money for the expenses. Though the lie had no feet to stand, yet under a calculated treacherous move, the Sessions Judge declared both of them guilty on 26th October, 1871 and ordered that they be executed. Three Indian Officers Mir Gulam Mohammad, Chandu Lal and Kanaiya Lal confirmed the sentence execution by hanging till death.

After pronouncing the execution verdict, the case was referred to Chief Court for confirmation. One of the Judges, Boulenois declared the witnesses as one-sided and non-trustworthy and influenced by greed or fear. He converted the death penalty to life imprisonment in Andaman and Nicobar islands. Perhaps he was not aware that the punishment was not based on truth or justice but was over shadowed by political considerations to crush the anti-government Kuka movement. But Justice Campbell rectified the mistake committed by judge Boulenois and confirmed the death penalty. Justice Lindsay confirmed it on 23rd November and both Rattans were executed on 26th November, 1871. The old Banyan tree outside Ludhiana jail stands a mute testimony to it even today.

Suba Rattan Singh spoke in a challenging tone at the time of his execution:

“Oh white skinned, listen carefully. You have gone out of your head. You do not have a just court but it delivers injustice. By killing me you are digging your grave. He who would kill you is residing at Ramdas Pura. What is there if you kill one or two snakes, your death demon hovers over your head? We also will not vanish but will take a rebirth from the womb of a brave Sikh woman. In our new life, we would again take up arms against you.”¹⁰

(Satguru Bilas Part I by Santokh Singh Bahawal)

The news of the execution of the judicial Suba Rattan Singh disturbed the Satguru and tears rolled down his eyes.

The British were afraid of their dooms day and feared Satguru Ram Singh. J.W. Macnabb Commission, Ambala wrote in a memorandum on 4th November 1871 that based on the reports available since 1866, it could be construed that Satguru Ram Singh was their sole leader and whatever happened was in his full knowledge. He was anti British. His organization ‘Kuka’ was violent by nature. He should be externed to a place where he might not get his followers. The Subas should be house arrestred.”

Macnabb was irritated even by the saying of prayer by the Kukas. He wrote that the Kukas recite the religious writings ‘Ugardanti’ and Chandi di War’ from Guru Gobind Singh’s Granth. These writings incite rebellion. It was clearly written in ‘Ugardanti’ that:

“I always bow before you, oh Almighty
Under your patronage, I would kill the enemy
Fulfill my this wish to end the distress of the cow
Oh lord, listen to my prayer
Kill the demon and protect the cow.”¹¹

Panjab Financial Commissioner G.M. Ogleaven writes: “In so far as leaders were concerned, the anti-cow killing movement was nothing but sedition under the garb of religious upsurge.”

A Persian newspaper wrote in its 1884 issue that “While the

Muslims kill the cows, but they do so under the orders of the British officers. These officers want to continue the wedge in the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims”

The opposition to government policies by the Namdhari Sikhs amounted to attack on the butcheries. They did not care for their lives to protect the cow. They contributed a lot to bring an awakening in the country.

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THE HISTORIC MALERKOTLA TRAGEDY

MALERKOTLA WAS A princely state of 68 villages given in dowry by Sultan Bahilol Lodhi to his daughter. It was spread over in an area of 167 square miles. Nawab Sher Mohd. of this Afghanistani Pathan state was greatly revered by the Sikhs as he raised his voice against the killing of the younger Sahibzadas. But the Sikhs were annoyed also for the freedom given to the people of this state for cow slaughter leading to the virtual extinction of the cow breed. The Nawab never showed any concern for the feelings of the Hindus and the Sikhs towards cow. Annoyed at this, Baba Sahib Singh Bedi attacked Malerkotla with cannon fire in 1794 to set right the killers of the cow. On his way back, he hid the unused cannon balls at Raiyan (Ludhiana) and went to Una (Hoshiarpur)

The Nawab of Malerkotla died in 1871 and his descendant was a minor. The management of the state affairs was under Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana L. Cowan. The Mulims in the state used to take away cows from the grazing herds at his instigation. They used to kill these cows and no one dare even raise an eyebrow against them. The Hindus and Sikhs in the state however used to be greatly hurt at it.

Suddenly, a tragic incident happened at Malerkotla in January 1872 which instigated the gory happenings.

The village headman (*Nambardar*) of Farwahi village Gurmukh Singh Kuka was on his way to Malerkotla to deposit land revenue. He saw a vegetable seller sitting at the back of an old oxen laden with a large quantity of radish. He was eating radish. The village head requested him to have mercy on the old animal and get down and walk. He became furious leading to heated exchanges. The matter reached the city Police Inspector who

butchered the oxen in the presence of Gurmukh Singh and paid its price to the vegetable seller. The village head was not able to swallow the insult and went straight to Bhaini Sahib, without depositing the land revenue.

The Maghi festival was being celebrated at Bhaini Sahib. The festival celebration was fixed for 11th to 13th January 1872 in memory of Satguru Ram Singh's wife Mata Jassan who had left for her heavenly abode in November 1871. The Kukas could never tolerate cow slaughter and levelling of false charges against them. At these instigations, they used to become furious and were ready to do anything which led to Amritsar and Raikot incidents.

In Lahore, a judge Jaisi Ram gave a decree against a goldsmith Kuka Bishan Singh on 30th August, 1871. He was implicated in a false case. In a fit of rage, Bishan Singh hit Judge Jaisi Ram with a *slotar* (heavy stick) on the head and he died. He was tried and ordered to be hanged till death.

Dussehra festival was celebrated on Monday, the 23rd October 1871 at Bhaini Sahib and a largely attended Diwali festival on 12th November 1871 at Amritsar under the patronage of Satguru Ram Singh. Bhai Budh Singh, the younger brother of the Satguru participated in these festivals.

Bhai Budh Singh made a living for his family from the small earnings from his ancestral profession. He appeared to be a bit indifferent towards Panthak activities. But in June 1871, the Satguru asked him to leave the profession and serve the humanity and take food in the free kitchen. He obeyed it gladly. How it all happened, neither he nor the people knew but it was known to the Satguru alone. Under Satguru's orders, he participated in the festivities. The government had deputed police force under Inspector Sarfaraz Khan of Sahnewal Police Station to keep an eye on the celebrations.

The festival ended on 13th January 1872. About 500 maunds (approx 200 quintals) of flour, pulses and vegetables were cooked and served at the festival. Gurmukh Singh Farwahi reached there

at a time when the festivities were coming to an end and the congregation was departing. He narrated his tale of woes to a group of about one hundred Sikhs. Heera Singh Sakraudi was also among the listeners. Gurmukh Singh told him to take revenge of the incident. Seven more Sikhs from Rarh village joined them. Engrossed in their discussions over the issue, they reached the Akal Bunga from Ramsar and more people joined them. They were firm in their resolve to take revenge. Suba Lakha Singh tried to pacify them but nobody listened to him. It appeared this group of about 250 Sikhs was ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause. They included, apart from Lahina Singh Sakraudi, Mai Khem Kaur from Ditoopura and Ind Kaur from village Handiaya. They asked the people to join them and sacrifice their lives in the noble cause of protection of the cow, poor and the nation.

The Satguru himself came to Akal Bunga to pacify them and give solace to the martyrs' contingent. He told them that "on the one hand, the British are powerful and on the other, the Khalsa is beaming with nationalism. A weak fellow like me is caught in between.....Make no haste. Whatever you utter, the police, reports it to the British. They tell us that your Sikhs are talking of insurgency."

The protector of the weak ordained,"You bow before me and ask for orders. I am not in favour of action as the time is not ripe as yet for it and we are not fully prepared. You get yourself busy in the praise of God and recitations. Who has given you the orders to attack Kotla?" Heera Singh said, "In their dreams, Guru Teg Bahadur gave them this order."¹

(Satguru Bilas Part I – Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal)

The Satguru had a wider vision. He had planned to mobilize people from Peshawar to Kanyakumari and Mumbai to Assam in non-cooperative, swadeshi movement and to remain firm in one's religion, culture and thinking. The Kuka movement was still in its nascent stage eventhough it got full support all around. Hard work was needed for atleast one more year to make it strong. There

was no room, as yet, for an armed struggle.

But the ecstatic Sikhs were ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause of religion. They silenced the Satguru citing the example of Guru Teg Bahadur. The Satguru accompanied the group of about 13 Sikhs to the community kitchen to fulfil their desire to have meals with him. He met Sarfaraz Khan, who was accompanied by five sepoy on the way. The Satguru told him in the presence of the Sikhs that they were not obeying his orders. Therefore, the government should take steps to prevent any untoward incident. He nodded in affirmation but it was not clear whether the government would take any preventive steps or not.

After having supper, the Kuka Sikhs went to Akal Bunga. They cried hoarsely from there, "who ever is ready to sacrifice his life with us for the protection of the religion, come and join us." S. Heera Singh drew a line with his sword and gave a call that those who were ready for the sacrifice, they should cross the line. The head count of those who crossed the line was 140 Sikhs and two lady activists.

The Group had *Safajung* (battle axes), choppers, spears, bamboo clubs with crooked grip, fodder cutting choppers and one or two swords. No war could be won with this sort of weapons and at best only a protest could be registered to assuage one's heated up passions.

The contingent crossed Bhaini Sahib. The Deputy Inspector Sarfaraz Khan put Sergeant on its trail. The Sergeant sent information about the group crossing over the border and entering Patiala State. After starting from Bhaini Sahib in the afternoon, the group reached Rabbon village and made a halt at the village well. They borrowed utensils from the villagers and purchased essentials, cooked food and had their dinner and fed the needy passer by poor also.

The Satguru handed over a list of 13 Sikhs to Suba Lakha Singh. These Sikhs were: Lahina Singh, Heera Singh, Anup Singh, Udham Singh, Nand Singh Handiaiya, Joga Singh, Waryam Singh,

Bhag Singh Mahiraj, Narain Singh Rarh, Sahib Singh, Sujan Singh, Gian Singh and Kahn Singh Bulhira. He first informed Sahnewal Police Station that these Sikhs, alongwith about 125 other Sikhs had left in a fit of raze. It was feared that they could indulge in some untoward activity and requested that the Government should take preventive action. When the authorities at the Police Station did not pay any heed to his warning, he approached Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana and appealed for preventive action.

On 15th January 1872, he was put behind the bars.

Sarfaraz Khan met D.C. Ludhiana on the night of 13th January and explained to him about the events taking place and the follow up action. Deputy Commissioner L. Cowan called advocates from Patiala and Malerkotla on 14th January 1872 and asked them to remain vigilant. On 14th January, the martyrs' contingent started for Malaud in the afternoon and reached the fortress like bungalow of landlord Badan Singh by the night. He had at one time offered the Satguru for some kind of service he could do for the cause. Heera Singh reminded him of his offer to the Satguru and asked for weapons and horses. He told the landlord that they intend attacking Malerkotla. The landlord became nervous and feared government action against him and started finding excuses to refuse. In a fit of raze, a lady activist Ind Kaur attacked him and injured him with her axe. He ran inside his house but was again attacked with a battle axe. He bolted from inside.

This created rucus. His orderlies attacked the Sikh contingent. A large number of onlookers had gathered on the scene. In the fighting, Badan Singh's coachman Buta and his clerk Nabi Bukhsh were killed. Badan Singh and Nihal Singh were injured. From the contingent, Nand Singh Handiaiya and Attar Singh were killed. Bhagwan Singh son of Ram Singh, Gian Singh son of Doola Singh, Thamman Singh son of Albel Singh and Mohar Singh son of Gulaba of village Aliwal Pur (Jallandhar) were injured. The first three belonged to Patiala State.

The Sikhs from the contingent laid hands upon a few swords, rifles and ammunition and two horses and a mare from the stable.

Amidst the stone pelting and attacking mob, they left the place and set on their onward journey. The injured Sikhs were left behind who were handed over to the police by the people during the night itself. Badan Singh's father Mit Singh had sent a messenger to Dehlon police station to report the incident and to give the news about the attack. The news reached Ludhiana.

The contingent headed for Malerkotla during the night and reached there by the dawn. City gates were closed. Gurmukh Singh Farwahi knew that a wall near the key gate had collapsed. One Sikh scaled the collapsed boundary wall from that side and opened the gate. Rest of the contingent entered the premises through the gate. The guards shouted asking them who they were and attacked a Sikh with a heavy bat. The Sikh escaped the attack but the Turk guard was killed by the contingent. The Sikhs straight headed for Mohalla Chirhimaran and released the cows tied to the posts for butchering. The Sikhs raised martial slogans on the top of their voice and advanced further. The Muslims woke up and ran helter skelter. Whosoever dared put up retaliation was killed. Crying in pain that the Sikhs had attacked, the people ran inside their homes in a huff. The Sikhs attacked no innocent person and moved towards the police station. They were attacked by the police and armed Turks at the cross roads. The Sikhs gave them a tuff fight with swords, battle axes, choppers, clubs and battle sticks. The Police Inspector was killed and those attacked the contingent fled.

Inspector Ahmed Khan, seven sepoy and some other people were killed in the fighting. Hafiz Ali Sher, clerk and Genda sepoy were seriously injured. Mir Bukhsh, Jhanda, Kaura and Jassa cried in pain because of their injuries. Beera, Kamma, Subedar Shahadat Khan Mohion, Abdulla Rahim Khan, Gulam Mohammad, Khudaiya and Deena were also injured.

Seven Sikhs were killed in the fighting. Two Sikhs were badly injured and 31 others also suffered injuries.

After creating fear in the minds of the people, the martyrs' column moved towards village Rarh carrying their injured persons.

They did not loot or took away anything from Kotla. They did not harm any Muslim woman. They only wanted to give a stern warning to stop killing of cows or else be ready to face the wrath of the Sikhs.

Heera Singh and Lahina Singh were on horse backs. They had rifles with them but no ammunition. Therefore, they threw the rifles away on the way in a well.

Led by a militant Pathan Samund Khan, an armed contingent arrived there and followed them and attacked them. At the time when Sikhs had attacked Kotla, he was away from the city. On returning to the city and seeing the bloodshed, he was furious in a fit of rage. He challenged young Heera Singh. The Sikhs retaliated. In the fierce fighting that followed, Heera Singh's hand got cut in an attack by Samund Khan but he beheaded him. The other Turks could not resist and took to their heels. Heera Singh tied his wrist with his turban to stop bleeding.

On 15th January, the Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner L. Cowan informed Commissioner Ambala T.D.Forsyth about the fighting at Malaud, Ludhiana. He called the Satguru to Malaud through Naib Tehsildar Lahina Singh.

On receiving the message, the Satguru started for Malaud. He rode a red horse. Subas Kahan Singh, Jawahar Singh, Sahib Singh, Khazan Singh and Joga Singh accompanied him on horse backs. He reached Malaud at noon time on the 16th January. D.C. Cowan, D.S.P. Lt. Col. E. Perkins and Civil Surgeon J. Ins had already reached there. A report was being prepared after investigations. The information had already reached about the incident at Malerkotla.

The D.C. complained to the Satguru about the bloodshed by the Kukas and told him that he should present himself at Ludhiana, if needed. The Satguru returned to Bhaini Sahib along with the Subas.

The martyrs' contingent of Kukas reached the outskirts of Rarh village. Cooking oil and a pan was arranged from the village.

Heera Singh fried his wrist in the boiling oil to stop bleeding. Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal writes about the manner in which he addressed the Sikhs present there:

“Heera Singh said whatever they had been ordered by Satguru Teg Bahadur Ji, they had carried out. If a Sikh from the contingent wanted, he could return home. Those who wanted to sacrifice their lives for the sake of religion, they could stay back. He was ready for the supreme sacrifice. There is no use of bloodshed by using swords.”²

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

In fact, Heera Singh was convinced that the people were not yet ready to join them in their armed struggle. For this very reason, people of Malaud and Kotla did not support them. The Satguru was right in his assertion that it was prudent to wait for a few more years and to set everything right through a peaceful agitation. Therefore, he felt that it would be proper that the contingent gets martyrdom. Sawan Singh counted. 70 Sikhs had remained behind, including two lady activists. Others had left.

Six Sikhs from Rarh village went for arranging food. They brought utensils and uncooked food. Pulses, chapattis, *Karah Parsad* (consecrated food) and rice pudding was prepared and served. Two more Sikhs left the contingent. The remaining 68 Sikhs, including the two lady activists recited the scriptures and hymns in praise of the Satguru throughout the night. At the dawn of 16th January 1872, they marched on foot from the outskirts of Rarh village after tasting the martyrs' *Karah Parsad* (consecrated food), as per the orders of their leader. They recited on the way, “The foreigners were on the run and it was the rejoicing everywhere.” Raising, shrieking loud voices, they reached Sher Pur Police Station and narrated proudly the incidents at Malaud and Malerkotla. They surrendered. A list containing their names, parental details and places to which they belonged was prepared as per the information given by the Kuka Sikhs.

Their surrender did not make the government, its informers

or stooges proud in any manner. When they had started from Rarh village, a person named Jaimal Singh from that village followed them. On the way, the village head of Ram Nagar, Punjab Singh who had served in the court of Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala also accompanied the contingent. The Administrator of Patiala Niaz Ali was present in Sher Pur Police Station. In the report prepared by the Inspector, the two were praised for getting the contingent arrested. It was mentioned in the report that 4 horses, 16 swords, one spear and a large number of cutting axes (*Gandase*), battle axes (*Safajung*), clubs (*Salotar*) and long sticks were recovered from the contingent. The group was dispatched with the Administrator for imprisonment in Umergarh Fort. The information about the arrests was sent to Maharaja Patiala and Punjab government.

The Administrator (*Nazim*) Sayyed Niaz Ali wrote in his report that based on the information given by a land lord, he reached Rarh village at noon time along with one court clerk and three sepoys. They forced the contingent of 68 to lay down their arms. Punjab Singh said he accompanied the Administrator (*Nazim*). In fact, the report was concocted to get the award and a tool to display faithfulness to the British. It was further improved. The reports did not tally. The Punjab government communicated to the Home Secretary, Delhi that the Kukas were arrested at Sherpur. Harnam Singh Swaich writes:

“The noble landlord belonged to Katcha Sidhaura. He had deep love and affection for me. He was a fast friend of my father (Harnam Singh’s father). He personally told me that the contingent had surrendered on its own. Martyr Lahina Singh, a pious soul had said the same thing. The father-in-law of village head Deva Singh Bral, Nahan State, an author of religious books was a pious family man who spent his time in the praise of the Satguru and recitation from the books. Ram Sahai from my village Basli, Pandit Devi Dayal and Samund Singh who were in village Rarh at the time of the incident, in their eye witness accounts said the contingent had surrendered on its own.”³

(Sant Khalsa)

The Deputy Administrator (*Naib Nazim*) left for Malaud and bragged about his bravery to D.C. Cowan who met him on the way. He ordered him to send the Kukas to Malerkotla.

D.C. L. Cowan sent a detailed account of the incidents to Nabha, Jind, Sangrur, Patiala and Ambala, based on reports on fighting in Malerkotla and asked for military reinforcements.

The hasty action taken by Cowan in sending the telegrams and letters, spoke of his perplexity and his intentions for giving death sentence to the Kukas.

On 15th January, a telegram was sent to Secretary, Punjab that 200 Kukas had attacked Malaud. S. Badan Singh was injured. One Kuka was killed and two injured. Secretary Punjab sent the telegraphic report from Delhi to the Home Secretary in Kolkatta.

On 18th January, 1872 the D.C. wrote to Commissioner that 500 Kukas had attacked Malerkotla. 8-10 had been killed. Reinforcements should be sent immediately. A day earlier, he had written to the Commissioner about the movement of the Kukas from Bhaini Sahib to Malaud with ulterior motives.

The Viceroy sent a telegram on 16th January from Kolkatta to Lt. Governor, Punjab that an experienced officer should be deputed to investigate the incident. Secretary Punjab in a reply telegram to Home Secretary Kolkatta wrote that the investigations were already on. He said he would go to Kotla in a day or two. The whereabouts of rebel Kukas were not yet known. He again wrote, "All is peaceful now. Seventy severely injured Kukas have been arrested at Sherpur."

On 17th January Cowan wrote to Home Secretary, Punjab: "Peace has been restored. One hundred Kukas have been killed or injured or have been taken into custody. Nabha, Patiala and Jind were helping."

On 16th night, Cowan wrote to Forsyth that, "the rebel contingent was not more than 125 but their crime is no simple

criminal activity. They had not only committed murders during plunder but also indulged in sedition by disobeying orders of the constitutionally appointed officials. It was absolutely essential that these elements were crushed at once with an iron hand to prevent the spread of this disease.”

Cowan had gone mad in rage. He being the overall incharge of Malerkotla was capable of going to any extent. He called in 750 armymen and 9 cannons and waited for the arrival of the Kukas from Sherpur. The Kukas were moved from Sherpur under police vigilance and led through such uneven, muddy and slushy tracks that it reminded the journey undertaken by Banda Bahadur to Delhi along with his Sikh companions. In the words of Prof. Kirpal Singh Kasel, “The historic event of cold blooded murders was being repeated. Despite being only about one tenth in number from that of the martyrs’ contingent of Baba Banda Bahadur Singh, the Kukas imbibed the same spirit of the brave deeds of Guru Gobind Singh and his ideals. The Ludhiana Police Commissioner met the contingent on the way when they were still four to five miles away.”⁴

(History Sant Khalsa Part I)

The oxen driving the carts were tired and had to be replaced. The martyrs’ column reached Jamalpur, near Malerkotla where cannons were already fixed. The contingent had no fear, disappointment, dejection or worry. But Cowan had become impatient by the time the contingent reached the place.

Thereafter, the naked dance of death began. L. Cowan was internally afraid of the revengeful intentions of the Sikhs for his immoral and imprudent act. He had therefore organized seven cannons to blow up the Sikhs and two were kept in readiness for personal safety.

The Sikhs were aware of the fate awaiting them and they were ready to accept death penalty, remaining in high spirits. They had put only one condition that they should not be tied to the mouth of the cannon like other criminals. They would themselves gladly stand in front of the cannon mouth and the action against them

could be completed by aiming at and firing at them.

According to Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal, “First of all Bhai Heera Singh and Lahina Singh stood before the cannon after taking a bath at the nearby pond to be blown up. The white skinned demon ordered that they be tied with ropes and made to stand before the cannons. The Sikhs however firmly resisted and told him that they would stand before the cannon on their own. They rushed to stand before the cannons. The British asked them to put their backs towards the cannons but the brave Sikhs refused and said they would face the cannons smilingly. They stood before the cannon with their faces towards it.

The cannons could not be fired even after being tried thrice. They made another attempt but failed. The white skinned told them that they should not feel that the misfiring of the cannons was due to any providential will or the divine power playuing its part. The British law was clear that in case the cannon failed to fire three times, the guilty would be spared. The law was violated.”⁵ (Satguru Bilas Part I)

The seven cannons were fired six times each. Noted historian Giani Gian singh was an eye witness to this brave act of the Kuka Sikhs. He wrote:

“I take this opportunity to write
about the brave act of the Sikhs
I describe the incident truly to which
I was an eye witness.”

“They were ordered to be blown up
by cannons by the British
When they heard about this order, they were over joyed
Their faces were glowing red and
they recited in praise of God
They looked at the cannons
as the winged insects hover around light
They were all overjoyed,

and having not even an iota of fear
This I saw with my own eyes,
Along with a large number of people.

(Sri Guru Panth Parkash)

Thousands of people from the villages, near Malerkotla had gathered there to witness this happen. On 17th January 1872, the last batch of seven brave Sikhs was ready to become the fodder of the cannons when a subordinate saluted Cowan and handed over to him a letter and retreated. After giving a cursory glance, Cowan handed over the letter to DSP Perkins and nodded to the gunners to fire cannons. The spattered blood of the martyrs at the sun set, when moist laden cool breeze was blowing, had put the arrogance of the barbarian to shame and made the Sikhs immortal in the golden pages of history.

The Commissioner had directed the D.C. through the letter to register cases against the guilty and to recommend harsh punishment for them. He had not proposed that they be blown up with cannons. He defied the order of his superiors for the bloodshed of the Sikhs. When asked by his wife, the D.C. wanted to pardon a child Bishan Singh who was in the martyrs group, aged about twelve years, but he put one condition that the child should say that he was not the Sikh of Guru Ram Singh. Bishan Singh reacted violently at this offer by firmly holding the priest like long beard of Cowan. He left his grip only when his hands were cut and he was beheaded. It made the martyrs' families proud and the heads of the traitors who were faithful to the government went down in shame.

The Satguru left Malaud on 16th January 1872 and stayed for the night at Siaharh with Sant Bela Singh. On the 17th, when he heard the roar of the cannons in the afternoon, he spoke to Kahan Singh that it appeared that the cannons had been fired. He nodded in affirmation. The Satguru said, "The Sikhs had accepted the firing gladly, otherwise it would have put them to shame. They have done an act of bravely."

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

The Satguru was proud of the act of the Sikhs who became martyrs. Commissioner Forsyth reached Malerkotla after dispatching the Satguru, Nanu Singh and the Subas under the charge of the Gurkha guards. Instead of taking any action against Cowan for disobeying his orders, he asked him to register cases of decoity and murders against the remaining 16 Kukas. Though nothing could be substantiated, still they were given death penalty. Deputy Administrator (*Naib Nazim*) and village heads Panjab Singh, Mit Singh of Malaud, Mukhtiar Singh and Narain Singh gave evidence in the case. They identified the weapons and the horses kept at Sherpur. The 16 accused were also identified.

The Sikhs were blown up by cannon firing and they joined the martyrs. A recommendation had come for Waryam Singh Marajh. He was released on the pretext of being small in height. But he stood before the cannon on a mound of muddy bricks, he collected from nearby area. He embraced death and became a martyr.

The Sikhs who embraced death and became martyrs on 18th January were:

1. S. Albel Singh Walia, Patiala state
2. S. Rur Singh, Mallu Majra, Patiala state
3. S. Kesar Singh Gill, Pitho, Nabha state.
4. S. Anup Singh Sakraudi, Patiala state
5. S. Seva Singh Rabbon, district Ludhiana
6. S. Shobha Singh Rabbon, district Ludhiana
7. S. Waryam Singh, Chhanna Bahadur Singh, district Ludhiana
8. S. Sham Singh Joga, Patiala State
9. S. Hira Singh Pithoke, Nabha State
10. S. Bhagat Singh Kanjhla, Patiala State
11. S. Hakam Singh Jhabal, district Amritsar
12. S. Waryam Singh Marajh, Ferozepur
13. S. Shobha Singh Bhathal Thuha, Nabha State
14. S. Sujan Singh Rabbon, district Ludhiana.

15. S. Bela Singh Rabbon, district Ludhiana.

16. S. Jawahar Singh Walia, Patiala State.

The list of Namdhari martyrs, based on different sources, mainly personal information was published in Namdhari literature or biographies. The number of Malerkotla martyrs is reported to be 80. They included the martyrs at Malaud near Malerkotla. However, in the book entitled 'Satguru Bilas Part I,' the names of 92 martyrs are published. The lists by Nidhan Singh Alim, Nahar Singh M.A., Ram Singh Majitha, Kirpal Singh Kasel and Tara Singh Anjan do not tally. But the list prepared on the basis of recods of Patiala State and Sher Pur police station and other sources appears to be more authentic. This list was published in '*Jag Paltau Satguru*' (written by Nidhan Singh 2006 edition) and 'History of Sant Khalsa Part I' by Kirpal Sngh Kasel. The same list is published hereunder. This list includes the 16 names of 18th January martyrs and the names of Mai Ind Kaur and Khem Kaur also, who were handed over to the Patiala state.

List of Namdhari martyrs of the historic Malerkotla tragedy of rare valour:

	Name	Father's name	Address
1.	S. Hira Singh	S. Kahan Singh	Sakraudi (BhawaniGarh)
2.	S. Lahina Singh	S. Mehtab Singh	Sakraudi(Bhawani Garh)
3.	S. Sibi Singh	S. Gandha Singh	Bhadal Thuha, Police Station Amloh, Nabha State
4.	S. Kahan Singh	S. Rakkarh Singh	Lahira, Police Station Delhon,district Ludhiana.
5.	S. Deva Singh	S. Hakumat Singh	Lahira, Police Station Delhon,district Ludhiana.
6.	S. Narain Singh	S. Mehtab Singh	Rarh, Tehsil Sher Pur

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|-------------------|--|
| 7. | S. Joga Singh | S. Sahib Singh | Mehraj Police Station,
Nathana Tehsil Moga
(Ferozepur). |
| 8. | S. Waryam Singh | S. Amrik Singh | Mehraj Police Station,
Nathana Tehsil, Moga
(Ferozepur). |
| 9. | S. Attar Singh | S. Bhag Singh | Mehraj Police Station,
Nathana Tehsil Moga
(Ferozepur). |
| 10. | S. Gurmukh Singh | S. Khazan Singh | Farwahi, Kotla area. |
| 11. | S. Bhoop Singh | S. Khazan Singh | Farwahi, Kotla area |
| 12. | S. Khazan Singh | S. Wazir Singh | Jaloke, Faridkot area |
| 13. | S. Harnam Singh | S. Nagahia Singh | Bhadaur Police
Station, Tehsil
Anhadgarh (Barnala). |
| 14. | Sardarni Indan | W/O S. Nand Singh | Handiaiya Police
Station Tehsil
Anhadgarh |
| 15. | S. Kahan Singh | S. Dalla Singh | Lahira Police Station,
Sunam |
| 16. | S. Natha Singh | S. Budh Singh | Barnala, Patiala area |
| 17. | S. Sada Singh | S. Mehtab Singh | Rarh Police Station,
Tehsil Sher Pur. |
| 18. | S. Waryam Singh | S. Makhan Singh | Barnala, Tehsil
Anhadgarh |
| 19. | S. Sujan Singh | S. Suja Singh | Roorka, Police
Station Delhon
(Ludhiana) |
| 20. | S. Uttam Singh | S. Mehar Singh | Roorkee, Police
Station Dehlon
(Ludhiana) |
| 21. | S. Attar Singh | S. Desa Singh | Majrai Police Station
Tehsil Amloh, Nabha
area |
| 22. | S. Jawahar Singh | | S. Desa Singh Majrai |

		Police Station Tehsil Amloh, Nabha area
23.	S. Basant Singh S. Sujan Singh	Said Baraha
24.	S. Nihal Singh S. Buta Singh	Lahira, Police Station Delhon, district Ludhiana.
25.	S. Gulab Singh S. Jamiat Singh	Misranwala, district Amritsar
26.	S. Bela Singh S. Ram Singh	Rabbon, Police Station Dehlon (Ludhiana)
27.	S. Mit Singh S. Budh Singh	Sakraudi Police Station Tehsil Bhawani Garh.
28.	S. Jawahar Singh S. Udham Singh	Ballian Police Station Tehsil Sher Pur
29.	S. Khazan Singh S. Bhagwan Singh	Peer ke Kot, Tehsil Rajisar
30.	S. Sada Singh S. Daya Singh	Rabbon, Police Station Dehlon Harnam Singh (Ludhiana)
31.	S. Sobha Singh S. Daya Singh	Rabbon, Police Station Dehlon (Ludhiana)
32.	S. Wazir Singh S. Bara Singh	Rabbon, Police Station Dehlon (Ludhiana)
33.	S. Gurmukh Singh S. Bahal Singh	Latala, Police Station Delhon district Ludhiana.
34.	S. Bir Singh S. Bhagat Singh	Police Station and Tehsil Bhawani Garh
35.	S. Roop Singh S. Kesar Singh	Dialgarh, Police Station, Tehsil

36. S. Basawa Singh	S. Saunda Singh	Bhawani Garh Dialgarh, Police Station, Tehsil Bhawani Garh
37. S. Harnam Singh	S. Lahina Singh	Dialgarh, Police Station, Tehsil Bhawani Garh
38. S. Anup Singh	S. Mehtab Singh	Sakraudi Police Station Tehsil Bhawani Garh.
39. S. Roop Singh	S. Noora Singh	Deva, Police Station and Tehsil Sahibgarh (Payal)
40. S. Ratan Singh	S. Jassa Singh	Gumti, Police Station, Tehsil Sher Pur
41. S. Gurdit Singh	S. Rabi Singh	Rarh Police Station, Tehsil Sher Pur.
42. S. Bishan Singh	S. Mehtab Singh	Rarh Police Station, Tehsil Sher Pur.
43. S. Dasaunda Singh	S. Bir Singh	Balasaar, Police Station Khamano
44. S. Waryam singh	S. Jassa Singh	Khanauri, Tehsil Sher Pur
45. S. Waryam Singh	S. Bahia Singh	District Ambala
46. Sardarni Khemo	S. Gurdit Singh	?
47. S. Prem Singh	S. Pal Singh	Gagarhpur, Police Station and Tehsil Sangrur, Jind area
48. S. Kahan Singh	Not clear	Police Station, Tehsil Sahibgarh
49. S. Harnam Singh		S. Dalip singh Mandah, Police Station Naianwala
50. S. Albel Singh	S. Sujan Singh	Ballian Police Station Tehsil Sher Pur

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|-------------------|--|
| 51. | S. Sada Singh | S. Mahan Singh | Rarh Police Station,
Tehsil Sher Pur. |
| 52. | S. Harnam Singh | S. Charhat Singh | Rarh Police Station,
Tehsil Sher Pur. |
| 53. | S. Baksha Singh | Not clear | Arora, district Sirsa |
| 54. | S. Charhat Singh | S. Dahria Singh | Ballian Police Station
Tehsil Sher Pur |
| 55. | S. Roor Singh | S. Buta Singh | Mallu Mujarian,
Police Station
Sher Pur |
| 56. | S. Kesar Singh | S. Dhyan Singh | Gillan Police Station,
Nabha area |
| 57. | S. Charhat Singh | S. Magh Singh | Roorka, Police
Station Delhon
(Ludhiana) |
| 58. | S. Bhagat Singh | S. Dayal Singh | Kanjhla, Police
Station Tehsil
Sher Pur |
| 59. | S. Jiwan Singh | S. Dhaunkal Singh | Phool, Police Station
Sunam |
| 60. | S. Shobha Singh | S. Khazan Singh | Bhadal Thuha, Police
Station Amloh,
Nabha. |
| 61. | S. Sham Singh | S. Mehar Singh | Jagga Tehsil, Bhikhi |
| 62. | S. Sadda Singh | S. Rupa Singh | Jagga Tehsil, Bhikhi |
| 63. | S. Mahan Singh | S. Mangal Singh | Sadak, Police Station
Malaud |
| 64. | S. Charhat Singh | S. Ram Singh | Ballian Police Station
Tehsil Sher Pur |
| 65. | S. Rur Singh | S. Jassa Singh | Bishanpura Police
Station Nabha area |
| 66. | S. Sadda Singh | S. Bir Singh | Not clear, Police
Station Tehsil
Sher Pur |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 67. S. Jabbar Singh | S. Gulab Singh
Gumti, Police Station,
Tehsil Sher Pur |
| 68. S. Katar Singh Not clear | Dhaura, Nabha area |

L. Cowan had called for the cannons from the states to know the level of their faithfulness to the British. He distributed cash awards to his confidants drawn from Malerkotla treasury, as follows:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Sayyed Niaz Ali, Naib Administrator | Rs.1,000/- |
| 2. Punjab Singh, courtier (<i>Darbari</i>) | Rs. 300/- |
| 3. Jaimal Singh, Rarh | Rs. 200/- |
| 4. Mastan Ali | Rs. 50/- |
| 5. Uttam Singh | Rs. 50/- |
| 6. Gulab Singh | Rs. 50/- |
| 7. Partap Singh | Rs. 50/- |

The Commissioner reached Malaud on 19th January 1872 for the court proceedings for awarding punishment to four injured jailed accused persons. They were given life imprisonment and exiled under section 396 of the Indian Penal Code.

If one reflects back at the incidents between 13th and 19th January, there remains no doubt that despite getting prior information, the police, the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and Heads of States did nothing to prevent these incidents. The bloodshed could have been avoided. It was possible that they deliberately allowed the incidents to take place so that they could take deterrent vindictive action and kill the Kukas to terrorise other people so that no body dare raise the banner of independence in future.

The barbaric action neither created panic among the Kukas nor helped increase the number of government stooges. The authorities also could not shed the constant fear of being over thrown any time. Despite cold blooded killing of about one hundred Kukas, the government remained under constant fear. The blowing up of the Kukas with cannon fire was described as wrong, unjustified,

anti-law, barbarian, cruel and inhuman by the Governing Council to the Viceroy and Governor General but the perpetrators were given no punishment. Instead, the Kukas were repressed with still greater force. Cowan was however dismissed from service on 20th March, 1872.

The government became more aggressive against the Kukas and the Kukas became more firm in their resolve to oppose repression with tolerance.

References:

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2. ibid
3. Sant Khalsa : Harnam Singh Swaich
4. History of Sant Khalsa : Kirpal Singh Kasel
5. Satguru Bilas Part I : Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal
6. Sri Guru Panth Parkash : Giani Gian Singh
7. Patiala Archives

KUKAS EXILED AND REPRESSED

THE KUKAS in general did not know what had happened at Malaud and in Malerkotla. Satguru's family members and the Sikhs at Bhaini Sahib were deeply worried when the Satguru did not return till late night on 17th January 1872. Everybody remained awake, shivering in the cold night, waiting for the Satguru to return to Bhaini Sahib.

The Sikhs heaved a sigh of relief when the Satguru and the Subas returned to Bhaini Sahib. But they were soon shocked to see sub inspector Shah Wali Shah and the sepoy who delivered the orders from the Commissioner Ambala T.D. Forsyth for the Satguru to present himself at Ludhiana.

The horses were tired and as such as per the orders, a bullock cart was made ready by Gurdit Singh son of S. Massa Singh of Moron (Jalandhar). He put gunny cloth over it and made it look like a room to escape cold. The Satguru put on a woollen turban and wrapped himself in a black blanket. He was accompanied by Subas Jawahar Singh and Sahib Singh, attendant Nanu Singh and Gurdit Singh, the cart owner. He reached the camp office at Ludhiana of Commissioner Ambala, Forsyth in the dead of night at 1 a.m. on 18th January 1872 under strict police vigil. The bullock cart and its owner were sent back.

At the time the Satguru left Bhaini Sahib, all his family members and the general public became restive. Everybody was deeply concerned and wept for the separation from the Satguru. They had virtually gone estatic and rendered helpless. They followed the bullock cart. Satguru's brother Budh Singh requested that he be allowed to own whatever charges the government frames and pleaded that he should be taken into custody instead of the Satguru.

The Satguru asked for stopping the bullock cart. He consoled

all and said, "Everybody should stay back and take it as God's forbidding. Nobody should sleep, recite Gurbani and if someone does not remember it by heart, he should count the beads. Tomorrow morning distribute the sacramental food (*Karah Parshad*) for one and one fourth of a rupee and go back to your places. I would come back soon."

Only the Satguru was taken to the Commissioner's circuit house. Subas Sahib Singh and Jawahar Singh and Bhai Nanu Singh were made to sit outside. He was charged in a treacherous manner with breach of peace and instigating rebellion.

The decision to take him into custody was not taken only for Malerkotla incidents. On the 17th January, T. D. Forsyth, Commissioner of Ambala Division had already written in a demi official letter even before the Kuka Sikhs were blown up in cannon fire that "The Kotla convicts would be lawfully put to death. Take a decision from the Chief Court and wait for 12 hours. I am waiting for the arrival of (Guru) Ram Singh tomorrow morning. Soon thereafter, I will return." It meant that a decision to send the Satguru into exile had already been taken. On the same day he wrote to Lt Col. J.P.C. Baillie, Deputy General Police, Ludhiana to reach Bhaini Sahib with 25 cavaliers of 10th Bengal Force and as many police personnel as may be available. The Subas and other Kukas should be taken to Ludhiana. They should be disarmed of all weapons, battle axes and other axes. Put Bhaini Sahib under the vigil of the force."

In fact, government officers were keeping a watchful eye since 1863. The reports of 1866 and 1868 were the examples in this regard. Even the Muslim newspapers had started writing that Sikhs were again talking of self rule. The increasing number of cadres of the Kukas was an eye sore to them. The British officers advised that the Satguru be jailed for life in the Andamans.

Commissioner Ambala J.W. McNabb and Lt. General Mc Andrew D.I.G. Ambala circle were disturbed at growing influence of the Satguru among the countrymen and the faith and trust the

people reposed in him as that of the warrior Guru Gobind Singh's was clear from the reports they sent on 4th and 20th November 1871.¹

Based on the talks with the Satguru on 18th January 1872, T.D. Forsyth came to the conclusion that:

- (a) The involvement of the followers of Guru Ram Singh in Malaud and Malerkotla incidents was still not clear.
- (b) Eventhough Guru Ram Singh had sent a report through Suba Lakha Singh about the movement of Hira Singh, Lahina Singh and others in a fit of rage from Bhaini Sahib, the police failed to take adequate steps and instead of stopping them blamed the Satguru of rebellion and breach of peace.
- (c) Mehar Singh and Jhanda Singh Thatta had sought permission from the Satguru before attacking and killing the butchers at Amritsar. He had tried to stop them firmly but the government blamed him of not giving information about their intentions.
- (d) After some time, Dal Singh, Mangal Singh and Dewan Singh came to him seeking his blessings for teaching a lesson and killing the butchers of Raikot. Eventhough he had firmly dissuaded them from doing so, still he was declared guilty.
- (e) He kept the government in dark and did not give any information resulting in the government not being able to punish the Amritsar offenders.
- (f) Keeping the basics mentioned above in view, the Commissioner passed a government order to house arrest Satguru Ram Singh and Subas. He was charged under Bengal Regulation III of 1818. This Regulation is applied on those who could not be held guilty under the law.²

A special train was kept ready for them. Satguru Ram Singh ji, his attendant Nanu Singh and Subas Lakha Singh, Jawahar Singh and Sahib Singh were sent to Allahabad by the Special Train. A European Officer Jackson and a force of 12 Dogras was sent with the train for keeping a vigil. The Secretary Punjab government

informed the Home Secretary, Kolkatta, Allahabad Magistrate and Government Secretaries of North West provinces telegraphically on 18th January 1872.

While travelling in the train, the Satguru thought that the action to deport him from Punjab province was taken out of fear of his non-cooperation and Swadeshi movements and more than 10 lakh people joining his movement and becoming his ardent followers. Not only the government but also its stooges, including the Kings, landlords, traders, priests and other heads of religious places were afraid of his growing influence. In the words of Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal:

“Kings and priests alike, everybody said that the Satguru be deported from Punjab. He should not be allowed to come back. If he continued to stay back, he would neither spare you nor us. All back biters said in one voice that he should be deported to some far off place.”³

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

At the instigation of Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala Roor Singh, Maluk Singh, Paharha Singh, Man Singh, Hukma Singh, Brahma Singh and Kahn Singh Nihang Subas along with S. Mangal Singh Bishanpuria were sent to Allahabad in the next few days.

The warrants of the arrested persons would have been sent alongwith them as a matter of procedure but their warrants were sent on 22nd January 1872. All of them were charged under the Act approved by the Vice President of the Bengal Council on 7th April 1818 according to which they were to be given facilities defined for political prisoners.

The Allahabad jail superintendent informed Magistrate J.C. Robertson about the damaged wall of the prison and got his orders to jail all the 13 of them in the fort.

All of them were made to give statements repeatedly. They all said they were Kukas keeping themselves busy praying the God. They had done nothing undesirable and would do no such thing in future also. The concerned officer told the Satguru that the Punjabis themselves had asked for their deportation from Punjab.

They had said that he had an army of unpaid loyalists and he could use them for whatever he liked. In the words of Sant Bahawal:

“The Satguru asked that he be told about the names of persons and shown their statements who had asked for his extrusion from Punjab. The British showed him their statements and gave him the names of all such persons. The British said that it were the bad days for the Punjabis that they had asked for deportation from Punjab of such a God fearing person.”⁴

(Satguru Bilas Part I)

Except the three Head Priests of the seminaries:

1. Head Priest Brahm Buta, Sri Amritsar
2. Sant Narain Singh Sekhwan, Ferozepur
3. Head Priest Dhianpuria Bairagi, district Gurdaspur,

all Head Priests, priests, and kings had recommended expulsion of the Satguru.

On 18th January, 1872 Police Lt. Col. Baillie headed for Bhaini Sahib from Ludhiana with army columns and cannons. When he came to know that there was no fort or fortress at Bhaini Sahib, he left the cannons behind at Kuharha. He surrounded the village before dawn. He had come with the intention of teaching a lesson and disarming the Kukas. He went straight to the Gurudwara. He asked Satguru's brother Budh Singh, aged father Baba Jassa Singh, daughter bibi Nandan, shop manager Waryam Singh, his personal attendant Makhan Singh, other attendants and devotees to leave the premises. They were all dejected and suffered from ill sleep because of separation from the Satguru. They were all ill fed and non-plussed. They did whatever anybody asked them to do. It was a biting cold winter morning and none of them had heavy clothes to cover them. No one had any fire arms and all of them were counting the beads with hands shivering in cold. They were meditating just by moving their tongue. Lt.Col. Baillie allowed them to pick up warm clothes from inside the Gurudwara under army vigil and started preparing their personal data and parentage.

The armymen were tired and hungry. They entered the community kitchen after receiving a nod, with their shoes on. They were the least bothered about the sanctity and purity of the premises. Whatever they could lay their hands upon, the cooked or half cooked sacred food, they ate and also put in their pockets. Some of them even hurt their mouth by taking hot sacramental food (*Karah Prasad*). They ate some food and the rest they spoiled. The locked room where shawls, long aprons and other costly clothes were stored was spared from looting. Col. Baillie called them back.

Heads of three nearby villages were called by Lt. Col. Baillie and he searched every nook and corner of the Gurudwara in their presence. All almirahs, high shelves and niches were searched. Even the ground was dug deep at many places. Grain silos and bins were searched by piercing with sharp knives struck at the mouth of the rifles. After unlocking Satguru's room, it was dug deep with spades and other digging equipments. The action continued on 19th January also. The Government was making a search for weapons, cannons, rifles, bombs or swords in all corners of the house, including the stable but it met with disappointment. The white lie of the informers was exposed.

Whatever they could lay hands upon was catalogued. It included 36 axes, 6 choppers, 2 hand knives, many iron rings flattened from edges for use as weapons, battle axes, spears, heavy clubs and sticks, etc.

There were 1,828 rupees and 8 annas (fifty paise) in the treasury. Besides, there were gold and silver ornaments, woollen wrapping sheets, shawls, one embroidered precious long gown and strings of beads, etc. estimated to be worth 5,400 rupees. These were put in a locked strong iron box, and sent to Ludhiana treasury.

The Kukas who lived in the Gurudwara or the dera were counted 172, fifty of them roving mendicants.

Lt. Col. Baillie noted that in the Gurudwara stable there were 82 cows, camels, horses and young animal progeny. 11 Sikhs were

left behind at Bhaini Sahib to take care of the animals.

Three Sikhs, two Sikh women and Waryam Singh and Makhan Singh were left behind in the Gurudwara to attend upon Guru's family: his father Baba Jassa Singh, brother Budh Singh, daughter bibi Nandan and her three sons Basant Singh, Surat Singh and Harnam Singh. All others were sent to Ludhiana from Bhaini Sahib, marching on foot.

Deputy Commissioner Cowan allowed 122 Sikhs to go home after warning them not to indulge in any rebellious activity in future. Most of the roving mendicants were released after relatives stood surety for them. No surety came forward for Lahina Singh, therefore Baba Darbara Singh Raisar stood surety for him. The daughter-in-law Bholi of his maternal uncle Maharaja Budh Singh stood surety for him and Mastan Singh Raiyan for Suba Gopal Singh.

A police post was set up in the porch of Bhaini Sahib Gurudwara with 20 sepoy and Inspector Umrao Ali Shah as its head. In a bid to deliberately tease the Sikhs, the authorities posted Muslim sepoy at the post. The police post was set up to keep an eye on the persons going in and out of the Gurudwara.

An Under Secretary in the Police department, Government of Panjab sent a letter to all Commissioners and D.I.G.s of Police on 23rd January 1872 enclosing an order from the Lt. Governor banning the assembly of five or more Kukas. In case they assembled, it was incumbent upon the police to disperse them. The police action to disperse the people had always been a harsh measure.

Everybody turned enemy of the Kukas. In case the police found out a Kuka, he was harassed and there was no reprieve. The police made a search for Kukas Panjab Singh, Nihal Singh and Bachitar Singh Jogewalian. They were arrested and taken to Barnala. The police Inspector asked them whether they were with those who attacked Malerkotla? Despite their firm no, they were challaned. Mai Ind Kaur also gave a similar statement.

Despite all this, they were released only during the third month of their arrest and that too only after taking sureties of five hundred rupees each.

On 20th January 1872, Maharaja Patiala in a letter asked for confiscation of all properties of the Kukas and informed the government that the real motive of (Guru) Ram Singh was to grab power again under the garb of religious activity. On 15th February 1872, Dayal Singh Majithia called a meeting of priests, head priests of Deras and representatives of Sikh landlords which was held at Atmritsar on 22nd March. It passed a resolution that their customs and traditions are different from the Kukas. They had no sympathy with them. The Kukas had disgraced them. They had ruined the goodwill earned in 1857 by the Sikhs by showing loyalty to the British. They thanked the government for the action against the Kukas. The resolution was sent to the government with signatures of 14 representatives.

In May 1872 from Jalandhar and on 28th June 1872, landlords, traders and Municipal members numbering 147 from Karnal, Jagadhari, Bilaspur, Mustafabad, Buria and Ambala districts also gathered to display their loyalty to the government. About 500 Sodhis, Bedis and Rais from Anandpur also did not lag behind.

Maharaja Raghubir Singh of Sangrur ordered the Kukas in his state to stop Kuka activities. He imprisoned Sahib Singh and his wife and confiscated their 120 acres of land. Maharaja of Faridkot arrested, beat and tortured the Kukas and dangled them upside down on the trees. In case the Kukas organized recitations from their scriptures, they were arrested and fined.

All contemporary dailies 'The Englishman,' 'The Hindu,' 'The Patriot,' 'Indian Statesman,' 'The Friend of India,' etc. were loyal to the government and against the Kukas.

Eventhough the government had no proof against the Satguru and the Subas deported to Allahabad, still it was afraid of their waging a bigger and successful revolt than that of 1857 War of Independence. Therefore, it had ill intentions of hanging them

unlawfully. Nanu Singh got to know of this from a British officer. What happened next?

Suba Jawahar Singh and Sahib Singh succumbed to the pressure. The Satguru asked them not to worry at all and said everything would be alright soon and they should concentrate on recitation of *Naam*. He asked them to recite Japuji Sahib at least 25 times a day. He told Nanu Singh to concentrate on *seva* (service) and recitation of *Naam*. One day, he asked them to test the fact that Guru's utterances were like the nerves and their recitation the end result. They should have faith in the God and everything would be alright and they would be saved.

One day, a British officer asked who should be given the key of the Dera? After obtaining opinion of all Subas and that of Baba Kahn Singh, the Satguru asked it to be handed over to his younger brother Budh Singh.

The Sahnewal police Inspector went to Bhaini Sahib and asked Baba Jassa and bibi Nandan about it. They also approved the handing over of the key to Maharaj Budh Singh. In the words of Baba Santokh Singh Bahawal:

“The brother is like an incarnation of the Satguru. He will hold the position like Bharat held it in Ramayana. On the 18th day, status quo prevailed and the routine re-established. The Sikhs were elated at the keys being handed over to the brother of the Satguru who was to them like the Satguru himself. The general public was very happy at it and considered both the brothers alike.”⁵

(Satguru Bilas Part II)

The keys were handed over on 5th February 1872. The government returned everything but not the confiscated cash. The locked box was handed over without being unlocked as its keys were lost. In the words of Giani Gian Singh:

“At the residence of Ram Singh,
Bhai Budh Singh became the head
but someone else was the master of the Kukas.”

(Sri Guru Panth Parkash)

When the news spread on 8th February 1872 that the Viceroy Lord Meo was assassinated, already terrified from the Kukas, the British government and its stooges were shaken with fear. A deeply aggrieved at the British justice, Gulsher Khan Pathan, undergoing life imprisonment stabbed and injured Meo when he was boarding the ship on return from a visit to the Andamans. A Sikh from Malwa region pulled him out of the sea, wrapped a cloth piece around his deeply cut stomach and put him to rest on the floor of the ship. He was given an award of one thousand rupees. A Kuka sympathizer sepoy Chet Singh was on duty at that time. He narrated the whole incident when he visited Bhaini Sahib. The news reached Allahabad also. It appeared that protection was provided by the Providence.

The government decided to shift the Kuka patriots detained at Allahabad to different places. The Satguru ji and Nanu Singh were secretly shifted on 9th March 1872 from the Fort and taken to Howrah (Kolkatta) the next day. On 11th March, a secret telegram was sent to Yangon (Myanmar, British Burma) that Ram Singh was put on board a steamer safely at 7 p.m.

There was no mention about Nanu Singh in this telegram though he accompanied the Satguru as his attendant. The government spread a rumour that he was a spy who left for Panjab after finishing his work and putting the Satguru on board the steamer. Others took it as a gospel truth but the Kukas were not getting any news about what had actually happened. The Subas at Allahabad and S. Mangal Singh were unaware as to what had happened with the Satguru. They were not aware of his whereabouts.

The Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of British Burma C.B. Crooke wrote to the Secretary, Government of India E.C. Bayley in Kolkatta on 16th March 1872 that “(Guru) Ram Singh has duly arrived this morning accompanied by one servant. He is being lodged in a separate ward in Rangoon Central jail.” The decision to send him to Tawai or Mergoi was to be taken later.⁶

The Satguru was provided with three high caste attendants in the jail. The Working Superintendent jail made Nanu Singh sign a confessional statement.

Confessional Statement of Nanu Singh

“I Nanu Singh resident of village Roorkee in Patiala area of Panjab who is now lodged in Yangon jail do hereby undertake and affirm that I would stay happily in jail at my own will and will serve as an attendant to my Guru as a prisoner for life. I will not find fault with anything and wherever my master will stay, I will also stay. If I refuse anything, I may be taken to task. I therefore write this confessional statement. I pray that it should serve the purpose of the British.

“Mein Nanu Singh Punjab ilaka Patiala gaon Roorkie ka rehne wala haal mukam Rangoon jail yeh ikrar karta hun aur sanadnama bhi likh deta hun. Kis waste to yeh jail mein apni khushi se raji-o-rajamandi ke sath yahan rahunga. Aur khidmat mein Raja Sahib apne Guru ke hamraj bila ujar bataur kaidi ke rahunga. Kabhi koi baat ka ujar nahin karunga. Aur jidhar yah Raja Sahib rahenge udhar mein bhi rahunga. Kabhi koi baat ka ujar karun to baatal hai. Is waste yeh sanadnama likh deta hun. Lihaja sarkar ke kaam aye.”

(Thumb impression of Nanu Singh)

March 1872

Nanu Singh Sikh signed in my presence
Sd/- Working Jail Superintendent ⁷

The government took action against the Subas after deporting the Satguru. The D.I.G. obtained reports about all Subas from district Superintendents of police about the residence of the Subas and their area of work. The Commissioner Ambala J.W. McNabb stayed at Allahabad from 23rd to 25th April. He interrogated all the Subas, obtained witnesses and prepared his report. Based on this report, a case was made out and filed in the Governor General's Council. The Officiating Secretary to Government of India H. L. Dampier ordered detentions as follows based on the report, which

were implemented.

1. The Subas Roor Singh, Maluk Singh and Paharha Singh were sent to Aseergarh jail on 15th December 1872 for detention for an indefinite period.
2. Subas Man Singh and Hukma Singh were sent to Chunar Fort on 1st December 1872.
3. Subas Jawahar Singh, Lakha Singh and Brahma Singh were sent to Moulmein (Myanmar) via Kolkatta on 30th December 1872 for detention for a very long period.
4. Subas Sahib Singh and Kahan Singh Nihang were initially detained at Allahabad and later sent to Aden on 24th February 1873. Suba Sahib Singh fell ill there because of climatic change. So both of them were brought to Hazari Bagh jail on 5th May 1875 and detained there.
5. Mangal Singh Bishanpuria was released on 3rd March 1873 on a recommendation by the Maharaja of Patiala.⁸

According to the British Secretary for India Duke of Angle, the authorities had the right to imprison the Subas only after trying them in a court of law. But the Government of India did not consider that the Subas were criminals and therefore felt that it was right in treating them as political prisoners.

The British thus violated all rules and regulations to deport and detain the Subas. They were afraid of trying them in a court of law. On the other hand, the ban on the assembly of 5 Kukas was enforced with an iron hand. In the words of Kirpal Singh Kasel:

“The motive of the British was not only to put down the Kuka movement with force but also to terrorise the general public so that nobody raised a voice against the foreign rule. The government adopted a multi-pronged approach to achieve this end.”⁹

(History of Sant Khalsa Part I)

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THE BRIGHT GLOWING LIGHT PREVAILED

THE KUKAS WERE habitual of getting up from sleep while stars were still on as a matter of routine but they used to eagerly await the dawn. They used to complete recitation of Sri Bhagauti ballad with the first ray of the sun. The night of separation from Satguru Ram Singh was longish. The British government and its stooges were making it still darker. They were blind in power so how could they allow any ray of light of their choice to others?

Eventhough the newspapers in Bengal had published that the Satguru was detained in Yangon but the people of Panjab did not know his whereabouts. The Satguru wrote a letter to Subas Gopal Singh and Bhai Budh Singh on 24th June 1872 about his welfare and to routinely know the welfare of his people. Opinion was asked on 29th August 1872 whether it could be sent to Bhaini Sahib but the permission was declined and the matter ended.

The Central jail where the Satguru was detained was at one time a female ward. It had a separate well, kitchen and toilet. In his room besides the bed there was a chair and a table. He was allowed to walk in the ward and sit and sleep wherever he liked but was not permitted to have any contact with the outside world.

The Satguru was provided very good food meant for political prisoners which included dry fruits, fruits, vegetables, cow milk etc. The government used to spend 40 rupees a month on him. But it was extremely hot at that place so he was detained in the Cantt Circuit House. India's last Moghul emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was also detained till 1862 at this place. The Satguru was transferred to this place on the first day (Sangrand) of the seventh solar month of Bikrami calendar (Assu) on 16th September 1872 on Voilyes Road (Oovizara Road). The security was so tight that not even a bird could penetrate it.

The Voyles Road house measured 44'x 44'. There were four big rooms. After leaving 27 feet area, all around, there was a boundary wall 8'6" high. It was surrounded by a 5 feet deep ditch. A well was dug. It was surrounded by the walk path for the security guards and their huts. The Satguru was considered such a dangerous fellow for the ruler. A tight vigil was kept on him day and night.

To create a fear psychosis among the people in Panjab, a public proclamation went round at the beating of drums that anybody who claims that Ram Singh will come back would be punished. The Namdharis suffered cruelty.

The rulers of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and Kapurthala called the Kukas from the villages in their states and told them firmly to shun Kuka activity, take water from the leather bucket, put off the long underwears and do not assemble for recitation from the scriptures. 45 Kukas were sent to Narain Singh at Nabha with the direction that they be converted and made to take *Amrit*. Bhagwan Singh and other Sikhs remained adamant and did not accept the conversion and did not take *Amrit*.

Investigations were made from Hazro Sahib about identification of the Kukas. Amar Singh and Harnam Singh said they were the Kukas and the authorities were free to do whatever they wanted to do.

At Bhaini Sahib, Satguru Hari Singh (Satguru Ram Singh's brother Budh Singh) organized five Akhand Paths with all rituals for the first time on the occasion of Dussehra festival for the welfare of the Satguru. On a complaint by the informers, Police Superintendent Warboton dissuaded them from the recitations and firmly told that if they did not stop, they would be deported to foreign land.

Village headman Sukhu and some other elite always used to carry tales to the government. Police chowki Havildar, blind of one eye was very repressive. Only five Sikhs were allowed at a time to go to the Gurudwara for paying their obeisance after noting

down their names and addresses. Other Sikhs used to wait for their turn sitting at the soil mounds in rain, storm and severe cold or extreme summer heat. The Havildar did not allow even the food from the community kitchen to reach them.

Baba Jassa Singh died in 1874. The pyre was made for the funeral near Ramsar. The government did not allow the funeral at that place. The funeral pyre was therefore set near the sepulcher of Baba Mansa Ram near Raiyan and his body was consigned to flames.

The village humourist Muslim bard (*Marasi*) used to spit filthy language standing at the doorstep at the instigation of the police. Other people also used to cry foul in derogatory language. But Maharaj Budh Singh always acted in a restrained and polite manner and persuaded the Sikhs not to show anger.

In Yangon, the Satguru asked the government to provide him selected verses from the Sri Adi Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Garanth. The Chief Commissioner of British Burma (Myanmar) wrote to Home Secretary, government of India on 11th May 1872 about it and later to Panjab government. The scriptures were sent after deleting certain portions, including the *Bachitar Natak*. The Saguru was taken out for a ride in the *Buggie* thrice a week to take care of his health.

The Satguru used to remain engrossed in recitation from the scriptures and thought that the breaking of the contact with fellow countrymen was not for nothing. He used to think of ways to establish contact. In his bid to find out some link, he served food to Pandits from Yangon in his bungalow. To meet the expenditure, he had received one hundred rupees at the time when he transferred all his moveable and immoveable property in the name of his brother Budh Singh. Sixteen rupees were deducted as government expenditure on it.

The main motive to call the Pandits for religious feeding was to bring to their notice that an Indian, especially Panjabi was detained there, who was as big in stature as Zafar. The motive to

call for money from Panjab was to make his whereabouts known to the people.

Maharaja Budh Singh gave an application on 13th January 1873 for permission to meet the Satguru. It was rejected so that nobody could come to know where he was detained.

The application given by Harnam Singh and Chandon for a meeting with the Satguru was accepted. They were permitted to visit Yangon on 23rd October 1874. This triggered a ray of hope. They reached Yangon with offerings of money and clothes. They met the Chief Commissioner on 16th April 1875. They were taken into custody under an order and deported to Kolkatta in a steamer on 25th April 1875. Both narrated their tales of woes but might is always right.

The Kukas left no stone unturned in their search for the Satguru. Baba Darbara Singh Grewal was the village headman of Raisar Patiala village and a land lord but he took up service at Bhaini Sahib after he converted himself to be a Kuka. In connection with some work, he used to meet Ludhiana Police Superintendent Warburton. He visited Ludhiana in the winter season of 1874. Warburton's wife was alone at that time in the house. On her asking, he told her that he was dejected because of separation from the Satguru. During his next visit, she gave him the address of the Rangoon bungalow of the Satguru which she obtained from her husband somehow or the other. Baba Darbara Singh saw a ray of hope. With the glow in his eyes, he returned to Bhaini Sahib. After discussing with Maharaj Budh Singh, he went to Raipur on a month's leave. He told his son that if anyone asked about him, he should be told that the Baba has taken a vow not to speak and is engrossed in religious devotion.

The Baba disguised himself. He dressed on a Patiala style beard and a tightly fit turban. He put on a silken long shirt, tight fitting trousers, held a silver brocaded long stick in his hands and put on a north western province in Panjab (Pothohar) style embroidered shoes on his feet. He started from Patiala and reached Kolkatta via Ambala and from there went to Yangon by ship.

Walking under the constant fear psychosis and hiding his identity, he reached the Voyles Road bungalow, asking the address here and there. It was surrounded by the ditch all around and a strict vigil with fire arms was being kept by the security.

One day, at an opportune time, he jumped across the high wall during the night and reached the Satguru and wept bitterly. He narrated the tales of woe to the Satguru. The Satguru was already sceptical of Government's intentions. He became serious. The Baba ji jumped the boundary wall again, came on the road and reached his place of stay. He used to talk to the Satguru during his outings on the *buggie*. The Panjabi attendant Nanu Singh used to give a cover during the heart to heart exchanges. For several days, the Baba watched the Satguru sitting in the lawn of the bungalow or he talked to him during his buggie ride and felt highly elated. He repeatedly pleaded with the Satguru that the general public was anxiously awaiting his arrival in Panjab. One day, the Satguru gave a Hukamnama and ordered him to go back. He boarded a ship from Yangon and reached Kolkatta and from there arrived at Bhaini Sahib. He narrated the whole sequence of events sitting inside the gurudwara. The Satguru's Hukamnama was read out which ordained them to continue recitations from the scriptures, organize *Akhand Path* (non stop recitation), have solid pulses and simple food. In the words of Santokh Singh Bahawal:

The Satguru wrote the prayer and it was read out, that whosoever would consider this noble person (Budh Singh) like me, will do the greatest service to me. Whosoever would not respect him like the Satguru, would suffer for seven lives. He is named as Hari Singh from this day. He will keep the public in good state. Consider him as head of the sect. I would not tolerate any indifference to him. He would forgive any injustice meted out by me. Give food cooked at the open hearth to the hungry and clothes to the naked in my name."¹

(Satguru

Bilas Part II)

The message of the Hukamnama read out in the light of the lamp in the Gurudwara reached outside by the dawn. It gave a firm message that the cruelty and the yoke of slavery will end one day. New programmes would be chalked out. The master was not far away.

After taking permission from Guru Hari Singh, the Kukas started making schemes to visit Yangon and obtain Hukamnamas. Narain Singh from Phillaur knew Urdu and Persian. He put on a hooded cap, a chequered cloth for the loin and a Pathan style wrapping cloth for the lower body and disguised himself as a roving seller of asafetida, black pepper and cumin seeds. He reached Yangon and met the Satguru and carried back a Hukamnama from him. Sadda Singh from Amritsar put on a vermilion mark on the forehead, carried the essential items for the prayers and disguised himself as an astrologer from the Ganges banks. He posed as a horoscope reader and an astrologer to the Burmese. Bhagwan Singh Arhbangi disguised himself, changed his name and met the Satguru in Yangon. This went on and the Sikhs continued visiting the Satguru secretly. They used to bring the offerings and carried the Hukamnamas from him. No hurdle could stop them. A couplet truly reflected their desire and the ordeal:

Despite the snakes and the lions
and the demon of death like security
the devotees were not deterred
from meeting their beloved.

The Kukas had a spiritual bondage with the Satguru. Therefore the pangs of separation were difficult to bear for them. The non-stop recitations (*Akhand Path*), recitation from the scriptures, recitation of Chandi di Var and religious prayers were carried out and religious fires lit to lessen the pangs of separation and to keep the morale high.

In 1875 and 1876, 101 each non stop recitations from Holy Scriptures (*101 Akhand Path*) were carried out.

There is historical evidence of Sikhs saying the *Ardas*

(prayers). But someone recited prayers of ten gurus and someone of eleven gurus. Guru Hari Singh standardized it and started prayers for the Twelveth Guru.

Prayer

The One True God Be Gracious

The Protector be on Your Side

12th Kingship

All Gurus upto Satguru Ram Singh were remembered. Satguru Partap Singh ordered the inclusion of the name of Satguru Hari Singh and Satguru Jagjit Singh that of Satguru Partap Singh in the prayer.

The informers reported maliciously and police sepoy's escorted Superintendent J. P. Warburton for an on the spot verification of non-stop recitation from the scriptures in the Gurudwara. As per the plan chalked out by the Satguru, the couplet was loudly recited so that the reciter at the first floor could pick up the holy words and start recitation and the volume at the ground floor was put at rest.

Many devotees came in disguise to Bhaini Sahib hoodwinking the police. Satguru's maternal uncle's daughter-in-law Bholi visited disguised as a beggar woman and Mai Attri as Queen of a Sardar.

6,000 rupees hidden in the porch were dug out to keep the community kitchen going on. The devotees also made the offerings. Kahn Singh Burj and Baghel Singh Narli offered one thousand rupees each and Subeg Singh Marana five hundred rupees. Baba Buta Singh Lakhna used to collect donations from the people.

If somebody's son was getting married, he used to invite Guru Hari Singh to his house after taking permission from the British government. The general public was very happy at these visits.

Village heads Sukhu and Ghumanda made repeated complaints against the Satguru. Jealous of Satguru's popularity, Bibi Nandan also used foul language against him. But the Guru remained unperturbed and unfazed. He used to implement the

Hukamnamas received from the Satguru. Whosoever brought the Hukamnama, he would visit Bhaini Sahib. Bhagwan Singh Chhokra and Harnam Singh Moron acted in this manner. Many ladies also visited Yangon.

The British felt that the Namdhari Sikhs were increasingly happy but they could not find out the reason for it. They were however suspicious and perturbed over this development. They tried to bribe Satguru's attendants, appointed by the Government in Yangon and asked them whether someone meets the Satguru. They offered them that if they give the information, Raja Ram Singh would be punished and their detention revoked. Munna tried to keep an eye on the place where the Satguru hid his papers and pen and inkpot. He tried to find out who sends the messages and the offerings? He made a complaint but it proved to be false. The Satguru removed him from his service.

The Satguru wrote Hukamnamas in the name of Guru Hari Singh, individual Sikhs or groups of 10-10 or 20-20 Sikhs. He had changed his name and that of Nanu Singh. Budh Singh's changed name was Hari Singh. The British were described as Billa Singh and Russia as Sarup Singh.

He wrote in Hukamnama No. 13 that he be described as Dayal Singh and Nanu as Kirpal Singh. The 63 Hukamnamas and one 1863 Code of Conduct have been published by Jaswinder Singh M.A. in the book entitled "The Hukamnamas of Sri Satguru Ram Singh." Eleven Hukannamas were addressed to Guru Hari Singh. Some of the dictats in the 12th Hukamnama were:

- "Attar Singh ji, you tell Attri's parents why they fail to understand? Why were they acting like fools? Why they don't marry Attri to a Sikh youth?
- Everybody should teach Gurmukhi to their sons and daughters.
- You have written that you are liable to commit mistakes. So, brother everybody commits mistakes. It is only the God who is the forgiver and does not commit mistakes?

- Nobody should offer polluted (tasted) food to anybody or accept such food. It is contaminated food. Nobody can benefit from it.
- There were informers all around. If just one spy tells the white skinned that Ram Singh's devotees meet him in Yangon, the British in Panjab would immediately write to the authorities in Yangon and ask them what type of vigil they were maintaining?"²

The Sikhs used to stay in Yangon for days together to receive the Hukamnamas. The Satguru would come out in the open at 7 a.m., 12 noon and 4 p.m. He used to talk to the people during his outings in the buggy thrice a week.

Bahadur Shah Zafar's Queen Zeenat Mahal stayed in a nearby bungalow with her son and would have divine meetings with the Satguru. She felt that a Maharaja of her husband's stature or a noble person was detained in that bungalow,

A saintly person stayed nearby Satguru's bungalow. He helped in obtaining Hukamnamas or throwing the offerings inside. The Sikhs used to sit at a distance under the shade of mango trees. They drew closer only after a nod.

The Satguru wrote about the strict vigil in one of the Hukamnamas. The orders of the top British officers who ruled all the countries under British rule were pasted on walls. These said if someone talked to him, he would be arrested. If someone threw anything inside or outside, he would also be arrested. Nobody should be allowed to even stand nearby³.

(Hukamnama 1)

The Satguru wrote reasons for it.

"They were highly afraid of and kept a strict vigil over the suspected letters. They felt I could incite a revolt through my letters. They had put many guards on my security duty."⁴

(Hukamnama 6)

“They had brought me to Yangon but were afraid of that I might raise 1857 type of revolt, through my letters. They feared that I would instigate the revolt back home again. They feared my very existence itself, as a death knell to them and therefore did not allow anybody to meet me.”⁵

(Hakumnama 7)

The Kukas used to travel upto Kolkatta in Namdhari dress and stayed there in the Gurudwara situated in the garden behind the Sealdah Railway Station. They used to go to Yangon under disguise. They stayed there in the street near the Shiva Temple, Krishana temple or Kalibadi temple at Ferry Street. They used to take advantage of the well. As they were trained in this task, they used water melons or melons for this purpose. Security guards were bribed. The Satguru himself used to chalk out a plan. He used to ask them not to bring any offering or letters from Molmein. It was difficult for him to collect these things. You just convey the welfare. You sit under the mango tree. Don't come near. When I twist my cloth, only then you should come near but don't talk to me or don't stop.”⁶

The government used to tighten the screws of the guards also. In case it was suspected that someone had helped the Satguru, he was severely beaten with cane and even discharged from service. The Guru wrote to Guru Hari Singh on many occasions to reduce the number of visits to him by the Sikhs.

The British became highly afraid of the glow in the eyes of the Kukas in Panjab. They put the spies on the trail to find out the reasons for it. Sardar Attar Singh Bhadaur was loyal to J.P. Warburton. Ishar Singh Ravidasia who was in the service at Bhaini Sahib was also an informer.

British officers wrote about the detained and deported Satguru Ram Singh in 1878 that:

“(Satguru Ram Singh) was a very dangerous fellow. Perhaps he was the most dreaded person in India at that time and the exchange of letters with him should stop at all cost.”⁷

Lt. Governor Panjab detained some of the Kukas and was shocked at the recovery of the Hukamnama during their search. The Officiating Secretary, Home Department wrote to the Secretary Government of India on 2nd November 1877 that the political detainee Guru Ram Singh was so daring that despite being asked to stop the practice and defying the government orders, he continued exchange of letters with people in Panjab. The vigil in only was therefore made stringent.

In 1880, Dhanna Singh Gumti, Kirpal Singh *Ragi* (scripture reciter), Bhadaur, Shobha Singh, Harnam Singh Nathana, Savan Singh Rode and Harnam Singh of Gulabe ki Mandi reached Yangon in disguise, carrying 24 offerings. They were highly elated at having a glimpse of the Satguru. They tried to see the Satguru repeatedly. Dhanna Singh threw an offering inside the bungalow in the evening of 28th July 1880. The Satguru threw outside two Hukamnamas wrapped in a piece of clothe. Dhanna Singh picked up the Hukamnamas and raced away. He was chased and caught by the sepoy on duty Kala Abdulla Khan. Dhanna Singh was taken to police station and presented before Magistrate R.C. Evanson, the next day. The place where he stayed Thakurwari was searched. When investigations started, five Sikhs staying there left by ship on 3rd August 1880 and reached Kolkatta. Dhanna Singh's case went upto Commissioner, British Burma. He ruled that the bungalow did not come under the purview of the Jail Act 1878. The arrested person should be sent back. Moreover, the detainee was not Nathana Singh but Dhanna Singh. So he came back. Both these Hukamnamas are preserved in the National Archives. One of the confiscated Hukamnamas said:

Hukamnama

The One True God Be Gracious

“I, Dayal Singh write this and pay due respect to Bhai Sawan Singh, Bhai Harnam Singh, other Harnam Singh, Sobha Singh, Dhanna Singh, Kirpal Singh and the entire populace to accept my salutation to the Guru. I convey my regards to all women folk.

We are all well here and pray the Almighty to bestow his providential happiness on all. Rest all upto the God who may remove woes of all those whosoever are suffering. Pray God and all woes of physical body, superstitions and problems of one's own creation and all other woes of poverty and hunger would end. God's prayer is the panacea of all woes. Therefore recitation of hymns and prayers in devotion to the God are highly important. Get up from the bed in the early hours, in the last phase of the night itself, always take bath and recite from the scriptures and chant *Naam* (prayers). Do hard and honest work day and night and keep aside some money according to your capacity for religious purposes. Nobody should indulge in stealing. Have a bath in the night again. If you follow it as a routine, all your woes would end. This should be brought to everybody's notice.

Bhai Sawan singh you had written that two standards had been broken. I was not aware what these standards were. Therefore, I did not write back to you. I had now come to know that these standards were temporal and spiritual. The time has come to remove the old temporal and spiritual adage. God is all pervasive. He knows the result of all his doings. This dictat is also from the God. I have only put it in words. What else is to be written in the Hukamnama. Whosoever wants to know more, he could have a look at the Guru's Hukamnamas and obey them? There are two granths (Sri Adi Granth and Sri Dasam Granth), one hundred anectodes (*Sau Sakhi*) and *Prem Sumarg*. These are the Hukamnamas for the entire public. These are lying at Ramdas Pura (Sri Bhaini Sahib) and whosoever wants to see can go there and have a look at these. One can see any number of these Hukamnamas but should act on them also. There are people who see and act and there are others who see and don't act. It is difficult to address individually by name, I greet the entire populace. Carry the message of the scriptures to all. Whosoever recites the hymn, he will benefit and all his woes would end. I was also in great distress and had worries day in and day out but since the time I had started recitation of hymns and chanting of *Naam* late at night after a bath, all these worries are over. Guruji had also

mentioned about bath in the night which is of great significance. Whosoever obeys the Guru would live in peace. The example is before you. Guru's sons (Guru Nanak Dev's) did not obey and remained bereft of the Guru's inheritance. Angad, a Khatri from another place was made the Guru. Thereafter, Datu, Dasu, Mohri, Mohan did not get the Guruship. It was passed on to a Khatri boy from some other place, with whom the daughter was also married. Therefore, you might carry a hundred Hukamnamas but without obeying the guru you get nothing.

I would write something about the conditions at this place. I dissuade the devotees from visiting this place only because of this reason. People are after my life and blood. This is true and should not be taken as a lie. The guards keep a vigil with guns aimed at all the time. Their officers order them that if somebody talked to me, he should be arrested and if anybody throws anything from outside or from inside, he should also be arrested. Day in and day out, they convey this message to security guards. If they catch anybody handing over a paper, they arrest the guard also and torture him and even remove him from service. They would arrest you also and take me to some other place and torture me. They are the worst kind of barbarians and do not have any sympathy for anybody. That is why, I ask you not to come to this place. You cannot have even a glimpse of me and have to spend so much and take so much of trouble in coming here. If they allow meeting the people, I don't mind even if hundreds of you come together. I have written many times that don't visit this place. If you want to come, only one or two persons should come in a year or so. What more can I write? It is only the Guruji who is the saviour, otherwise there is no end. You get peace when you obey the Guru's words. If you do not obey, you do not get any peace. The money which you spend in coming to this place, it goes waste and you can spend it on recitations and get peace. Rest upto you. If the Khalsa wants good things to happen, they should not talk of visiting this place. Recitation and reading from scriptures and non-stop reading of sacred texts would give you peace and all your worries would be over. If I am, what is mentioned in *Prem Sumarg*, anectodes (*Sakhis*), *Ram Mirgind*

and *Pailad Sagar* and in the *Garanth* as the Twelveth Superior Soul., I would myself come back to the country. All perpetrators of ills would be finished. If I am not that one soul, why do you come here? Hundreds of carpenters like me are wandering in the country. Why do you want to come here? It would be better if you do not come here. Whatever possibly you could do is to keep yourself busy in chanting of *Naam* (recitation) and reading from the spiritual texts. Travelling this long distance and spending so much, all goes waste. Rest whatever you, the Khalsa, feel proper do. But it will be good for the Khalsa not to visit this place. Recite and pray with a strong conviction and all your wishes would be fulfilled. And if I am what is described in *Prem Sumarg*, *Sakhian* (holy anectodes), *Ram Mridang* and *Paihlad Sagar* and whatever is written about me as the twelfth Guru, then I would myself return to the homeland. All cruel chieftains and cunning persons would perish. If I am not that one, why do you visit this place? There are hundreds of carpenters like me back home. It would be good enough, if you do not visit this place. Instead, you spend your time and energy on prayers and recitations. It is no use spending so much and visiting this place. Rest, all upto the Khalsa, whatever it feels proper, it may do. I had my say. You may agree or not. I do not know when I would be able to go to the homeland. I am not aware of the month or time of my release. I also do not know the place where I would go. Narain Singh! It had been written in the *Pailad Sagar* that when there will be war back home in Majha, I would go back. Rest only the Almighty knows. If there is uprising, twenty five of you pray before God that whatever is good, he should guide you to that. I cannot guide you. If I was wise, I would not have been imprisoned. All of you give a thought to it. Let the Almighty be with the entire humanity and with all of you. The Guru may bless you.. Satguru we are at your mercy. This prayer is for the entire Sikh community.”

Failing to check Satguru's Indo-Burma link, the British decided to move him to some unknown place instead of resorting to harsh action, fines, punishments and jail terms. They decided to move him to Tawai or Mergoi but the final decision was taken to

shift him to Mergoi.

On 18th September 1880, the Satguru and Nanu Singh were made to board the maritime ship 'Ananda' and dispatched to Mergoi with a few special officials. He was kept there in a special jail ward under orders of the Governor General after reaching Mergoi on 21st September. His warrants reached there on the 27th October 1880. No lower level official knew where the Satguru was being kept. The ship reached Mergoi island, once in a fortnight, so nobody even thought that the Satguru would be there. The Kukas however came to know about it via Molmein.

The British were disturbed on two counts. They were afraid of the revolutionaries in India, who were none other than the Kukas. There were however, some others also who wanted Maharaja Dalip Singh to be brought back to Punjab. The other danger was from Russia via Afghanistan. Lord Litton started manoeuvring to break the Russian –Afghanistan nexus.

In Punjab, Sikhs had the protection only from Satguru Ram Singh. To them, he was their God, their Satguru, True Lord. They had blind faith even in the deported Guru. They had sympathies for the deported King Dalip Singh.

On the other hand, the British set up the Singh Sabha through their stooge Sikh leaders. The Sikhs had earlier also, in 1857 helped British win the war. In the words of Piara Singh Padam: 'Under these circumstances, some Sikh sardars helped the British. The Sikh army also did not revolt. One thing is clear that had the Sikhs helped the revolutionaries, it would have been difficult for the British to continue their occupation of India.'⁸

(Brief Sikh History)

Christian Missionaries succeeded in converting four Sikh students Aiya Singh, Attar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh to Christianity in 1873. The Satguru had already been deported. Kukas were restrained. Therefore, other top Sikh leaders took this incident very seriously. They were: Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, Kanwar Bikram Singh Kapurthala, Giani Hazara Singh, Thakur

Singh Sandhawalia, Giani Gian Singh Amritsar and Giani Sardul Singh.

This Group was formed to stop Sikh conversions into Christianity and for the spread of tenets of Sikhism. Baba Khem Singh Bedi regarded Guru Ram Singh as twelfth Guru and supported Bawa Nihal Singh Kalsian for his book '*Khurashid Khalsa*'. Sandhawalia was also an ardent follower of the Satguru. But the British could not digest it. They put their tout, the son of the cook of Prince, Gurmukh Singh in this Group. Giani Ditt Singh followed him. They formed a new Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Lahore, deserting the Amritsar Sabha. It had only one principle:

“Support the British Rule.”

Shamsher Singh Ashok describes the type of elite in this Sabha:

“.....Several Government officials led by Rai Mool Singh were included as members of this Sabha. Rai Mool Singh was the person who acted as the agent of King Tej Singh in 1847-48 and supported the British rulers against the Sikh Rule. H.M. Lawrence had awarded him a commendation letter. He was the courtier of the Governor General. Even if entry of such people in the Singh Sabha was a crime but prevailing conditions demanded to move ahead with government cooperation, otherwise it was bound to be a tremendous loss. So the Singh Sabha leaders had to toe the official line.

Governor Punjab Sir Robert Eserton, on a request from the Sikhs, and later Sir Charlels Edison became patrons of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha. Besides the two, some other prominent British officers also joined Education Branches of the Singh Sabha.⁹

(Punjab Dian Lehran)

According to Ashok ji, other principles of the Sabha were:

- (a) The Sabha will not act in any manner against the government.

- (b) Loyalty to the Nation and obedience of the government.

Amar Bharati refers to two points in this connection:

- (a) To try to run the Singh Sabha as a stooge of the British government.
- (b) To instigate a revolt against the times immemorial ritual of physical Guru from the platform of the Singh Sabha.¹⁰

(Sikh History and the Kukas – A Comparative Study)

The reason for bringing a resolution against the Urdu book “*Khurdish Khalsa*” by Bawa Nihal Singh Kalsian (Chhadrauli) was his depiction of Guru Ram Singh as the heir of Guru Gobind Singh. This Resolution could not be passed in the face of stiff opposition from Baba Khem Singh Bedi.

Satguru Ram Singh was anxious to know about the canard being spread about him. Therefore, he wrote in the 39th Hukamnama:

“Bhai Narain Singh (from Phillaur), you also attend the Singh Sabha at times. Just listen to them what they say. Do not create any bitterness. Do not speak ill to anybody. It would serve no purpose.”¹¹

The priest and the leaders from Amritsar indulged in blasphemy against the Kukas. They were not in a position to clear their stand as the government did not allow them to organize congregations or sit together. The government also did not allow more than 10 persons at a time for paying obeisance at Bhaini Sahib. They were put under total restrictions. The Sikhs who were government stooges and the priests used to taunt them. The Kukas used to visit Rangoon and narrate their pitiable condition to Satguru Ram Singh. He wrote a strong letter – a Hukamnama – excerpts from which are given below:

“I write on behalf of all Kukas. The priests of Akal Bunga

and all other priests, please accept my greetings in the name of Sri Waheguru. All other Sikhs also, please accept my greetings.

Singh Sahib, I would write briefly. To whomsoever you call Kukas, were not created as Kukas by the tenth Guru. All Kukas call Ram Singh as their Guru. If this was the reason for the differences over the Guru, then all priests from all places should beg pardon of the Guru. He will forgive you.

We recite only from the two scriptures and the scripture of Bhai ji and no other scripture. We do not recite any hymn, except the holy hymn.

The lie is apparently clever and sharper but never long lasting as the truth is. Whatever you are doing, you are asking Singh Sabha also to help you in that act and leave no stone unturned. You ask them also to you in this act. Whosoever had put his signatures in Mukatsar and at other places and in the Gurudwaras and among the elite Sikhs, all are torturing the Kukas.....your wisdom is clouded like the (*Masands*) usurpers of the offerings.¹²

(Hukamnama 60)

With a strong urge to have a glimpse of the Satguru, about 100 Kukas went across the sea. Research by historian Sant Bishan Singh has led to finding the names of 80 of them, which were as follows:

1. Darbara Singh Raipur 2. Naina Singh Muhana 3. Mihan Singh Sarhali 4. Bhagwan Singh Amritsar 5. Narain Singh 6. Jiun Singh Sarhali 7. Subegh Singh Sarhali 8. Kirpal Singh Majhbi 9. Sarmukh Singh Lakha 10. Harnam Singh Bhana, Faridkot State 11. Chand Kaur Bhana 12. Tahel Singh Sekhwan 13. Subeg Singh Muhana 14. Baghel Singh Narli 15. Lal Singh Latana 16. Bihari Singh, Ghungrali 17. Luhara Singh Ghungrali 18. Sunder Singh Ghungrali 19. Harnam Singh Nathana 20. Sunder Singh Kalari 21. Khushhal Singh Narangwal 22. Mastan Singh 23. Hari Singh 24. Sahib Singh 25. Genda Singh Ablu 26. Gurdit Singh, Amritsar 27. Kirpal Singh, Amritsar 28. Sadda Singh Amritsar 29. Mehar Singh Uba Patiala 30. Rattan Singh Uba Patiala 31. Daya Singh Uba 32.

Wasawa Singh Santu Nangal 33. Ala Singh Santu Nangal 34. Matab Singh Santu Nangal 35. Sunder Singh Cheema 36. Bhagwan Singh, Sakraudi 37. Matab Singh Sekhwan 38. Hira Singh Mandhaur 39. Ram Singh Langhia 40. Mehar Singh Langhia 41. Takhat Singh Ghungiari 42. Man Singh Mandhaur 43. Ishar Singh Mandhaur 44. Narain Singh Phillaur 45. Uttam Singh Jharmari 46. Attar Singh, Narli 47. Phula Singh, Narli 48. Gulab Singh Holawali 49. Harnam Singh, Moron 50. Kahan Singh Burj 51. Natha Singh Gakrhi 52. Sobha Singh Khuradpur 53. Hira Singh Badrukhan, district Sangrur 54. Dhana Singh Gumti 55. Partap Kaur Gumti 56. Lal Singh Gumti 57. Sham Singh Sarhali 58. Naina Singh Wariah 59. Jiwan Singh Sarhali 60. Ala Singh Uboke 61. Bahadur Singh Uboke 62. Jagat Singh Narli 63. Kahn Singh Thatta 64. Samund Singh Khote 65. Sharam Singh Laluana 66. Narain Singh Rode 67. Mani Singh Maisar Khana 68. Gurdit Singh Bhasaurh 69. Arur Singh, Amritsar 70. Baba Vasakha Singh, Bhoma Wadala 71. Bhagwan Singh Arhbangi 72. Harnam Singh Mandi 73. Kaka Singh, Fatehwala 74. Moola Singh, Fatehwala 75. Mastan Singh, Raiyan 76. Kahn Singh Chuni 77. Baba Jodh Singh Chuni 78. Ram Singh Chuni 79. Sher Singh, Chuni 80. Narain Singh Chuni.

The list clearly indicated that several Namdharis from the same village crossed the salty sea for meeting the Guru. The entire journey was completed in disguise by the ardent followers of Guru Ram Singh facing extreme difficult conditions, betraying the vigilance mounted by the government.

Satguru Ram Singh wrote to Satguru Hari Singh in one of the Hukamnamas:

“Write to me when Sarup Singh reaches Punjab. Take it from the Guru that when Sarup Singh reaches Majha, there cannot be any further delay. Rest at Guru’s will.”

(Hukamnama 24)

He wrote to Narain Singh, Phillaur:

“You must convey in detail about Sarup Singh and Billa Singh.”

This Sarup Singh was Russia and Billa Singh, the British who were staunch enemies of each other. It was believed that Russian forces would land in India through Afghanistan. Therefore, Baba Bishan Singh reached the Amir Sher Ali and briefed him about the strength of the Kukas and their repression by the British.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Ludhiana wrote in his report in 1880 that Joga Singh Dhurkot had told him that he met Bishan Singh who was with the Satguru in 1868 at Hazaro. He had won the trust of the Amir of Kabul and was given a job by him to gather reports about India. He has his agencies in Peshawar, Kabul, Bukhara and at the Russian border. He was the link man between Satguru Hari Singh and Russia. DSP Ludhiana wrote again on 9th October, 1880 that “Budh Singh (Guru Hari Singh) is in receipt of a letter from Bishan Singh which had resulted in the Russian enmity against the British.”

Apart from Ludhiana, there were many reports between 1880 and 1888 from Deputy Superintendents of Lahore, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur etc. about these links. According to these reports:

- “- Guru Ram Singh has escaped from Rangoon jail and would lead the Russian army attack on India, alongwith Bishan Singh.
- Four ex-armymen of Jammu army, all Kukas have gone to Russia.
- Kukas are preparing to re-establish the Khalsa Raj.
- Nine more Kukas went to Russia. Bishan Singh meets the Bukhara Governor accompanied by 300 others twice a week. Ram Singh has appointed Bishan Singh as his heir after him.
- In 1883 Bishan Singh had brought a precious long cloak and a picture of the Russian Czar from Russia and kept these at Bhaini Sahib.
- Kukas residing in the vicinity of the Russian border

are: Lahora Singh, Pishora Singh (connected with the family of Maharaja Ranjit Singh), a family member of Sham Singh Attariwala, Kahn Singh and Suhel Singh Kup, Malerkotla.

- They expect that Maharaja Dalip Singh will attack India.”

DSP Ludhiana wrote about it on 2nd June 1885:

“It is said that Bishan Singh is in the Russian army and commands several regiments. A few other Kukas also hold high positions alongwith him.”

Bishan Singh was so popular among the Namdhari Sikhs that Baba Chanda Singh wrote about him:

“A true follower of the Guru, Bishan Singh
having a spirit of martyrdom
he promised to the Satguru
to be always on his side
rest all upto the Almighty
whatever He ordains, would happen.”¹⁵

Baba Gurcharan Singh had inspired Bishan Singh. Disgusted, he himself went back to farming at Chak Ramdas after laying down arms. The Satguru visited him during his Sialkot visit in 1870 and he became an ardent follower of the Satguru. He was 5 feet 11 inches tall. Guru Nanak's follower Baba Pirana was from among the ancestors of the Baba ji. He was running a dharamshala in Kabul for preaching Sikhism. The Baba ji used to frequently visit Kabul (Afghanistan) since his childhood for the upkeep of the Dharamshala and preachings. He used to visit Kandhar, Ghazni and Bhukhara also. He knew Gurmukhi, Pashto and Persian. P.C. Roy has written in a reseach paper:

“They (Kukas) believed that Russia would mount a massive attack some day through Afghanistan to end the British occupation. The leaders had decided to send a messenger to the Russian rulers to convince them that all the Indians would fully support them in

their war against the British.”¹⁶ Kuka leader Gurcharan Singh and the messengers of the Kings of Kashmir and Indore had reached the Russian rulers.

Suba Gurcharan Singh used to carry letters received from the Satguru from Rangoon jail to Russia. He reached the Russian city of Kutta Karghan in Turkistan. According to Dr. Fauza Singh, author of ‘Kuka Movement’:

He gave a letter written in Gurmukhi by the Satguru to Russian Major General Ibnof in Samarkand. A West Asian merchant Jawala who knew Gurmukhi Punjabi translated it into Persian. It was given a deep thought after its rendering into Russian language.

Baba Gurcharan Singh was honoured with a cloak worth Rs. 700/-. Talking to him, the Russian officer Korolkov was fully satisfied. Details of Sat Gur’s letter were:

- “- We have dispatched Suba Gurcharan Singh.
- As per the prophesy, Russia will end the British rule.
- Three lakh fifteen thousand Sikhs are ready to support you.”

The details of the letter were sent to the Governor General of Russian Turkistan K.P. Kaufmann in St. Petersburg. He consulted Prof. P. Minaev and sent a reply through Gurcharan Singh. While he was on his return journey, a British spy Gulab Khan followed him from Tashkent. He sought all the information posing as a Russian spy and took away two letters in the name of the Russians.

The British rulers were stunned after coming to know of it. Punjab police officer Charles Brown talked to him about it. Lt. Governor Sir Robert Eserton paid a special attention to it and wrote to Government of India to issue warrants under the Bengal Regulation III. But the Secretary in the Foreign office A.C. Loyal said that the Magistrates in Punjab should take action on it. Viceroy Lord Rippon approved it.

Babaji was arrested on reaching Lahore. But he gave a slip and met Sham Singh at Sarhali, Amritsar and Guru Hari Singh at Bhaini Sahib and reached his village. The police at Ludhiana, Sahnewal and Bhaini Sahib could not do anything and lay in repentance.

He had given the letter he brought from Russia to Sham Singh and it was to reach Satguru Ram Singh. The government had information that the letter had been hidden under the cardboard fixed at the back of the looking mirror and Sham Singh would be going to Rangoon to deliver it.

The government acted very cleverly and the Kukas were also very cautious and took all precautions. Therefore, Sham Singh's son Mihan Singh went to Rangoon. He had served in Hongkong police and travelled in uniform. Sant Singh son of Dal Singh accompanied him. The Satguru was not in Rangoon. Both of them reached Maulmein. Harnam Singh, a sepoy there told them that the Satguru was under house arrest in Mergoi island. They left for Mergoi. British Burma Inspector General of Police wrote on the basis of information received from the police that Kukas aged 27 and 35 were headed for Mergoi on a ship,

When the ship reached Mergoi, the Deputy Commissioner of Mergoi arrested both of them. They were interrogated and ordered to leave Mergoi immediately. But not caring for his life Mihan Singh jumped the boundary wall of Satguru's bungalow during the night and handed over the letter from Russia to the Satguru. He was arrested the next day and deported to Kolkatta. Deputy Commissioner Lambert sent a message about their deportation to Kolkatta to the Government.

The Kukas remained firm in their fight against the British. They did not care for the restrictions or the repression. Because of the excesses against them, the people were generally sympathetic towards them. They were not in isolation in the Russian mission also. Narain Das son of Genda Mal of Hazro, Maratha Ram Charan Tola alias Nana Rao, Maya Hindu of Gujranwala and Shankar Rai from Haripur Hazro all had connections with Russia. Satguru Ram

Singh gave them directions from a foreign land. The patriotic Kukas used to approach every sympathizer for the independence of the motherland. They had the high ideal of relieving India of the shakles of British bondage.

At Mergoi, Nanu Singh could become a hinderance in the free meditation of the Satguru. Therefore, the Satguru created a mock atmosphere of quarrel and beating and made him admit that he visits Punjab. On 14th November 1881, he reached Roorkee from Mergoi, Maulmein via Kolkatta and even paid obeisance at Bhaini Sahib once or twice in disguise.

Following the posting from Bassian of a kind hearted Inspector, at times even more Sikhs stayed at Bhaini Sahib than stipulated. But the sepoys did not change their habits. They harassed even those Sikhs who waited for their turn to pay their obeisance at Bhaini Sahib sitting in the open fields. Genda sepoy used to rebuke and torture them and take bribe.

In 1883, Guru Hari Singh went to the fields to meet Arhbangi under the pretext of easing himself. He was from village Marana (Amritsar) and his real name was Bhagwan Singh. Some called him Arhbang Singh while others Arhbang Das. In the eyes of the government he was an absconder of the Amritsar incident and a co-accused in the Raikot, Malerkotla incident. He carried an award of Rs.500/- on his head. He had even been to Rangoon and brought the Hukamnamas from the Satguru.

Satguru Hari Singh told him about the police excesses. He was agitated and walked away carrying his moulded stick after paying greetings to the Guru. He walked briskly but blinded with the greed for the award a Havildar, a clerk and Genda sepoy followed him. When he entered the outskirts of Kot Gangu Rai village, the Havildar went back but the other two followed him. When he reached the outskirts of Nilon village, Genda ran towards him and hit him with a stick and abused him. Arhbangi held himself firm and hit him so hard on the side of the forehead with his moulded stick that Genda fell down. He died on the spot after receiving another hit.

The clerk ran back crying that Genda had been killed. The Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner and Police Superintendent J.P. Warburton reached the spot but could do nothing as the incident had happened outside his jurisdiction. Thereafter, the police stopped going towards the Gurudwara and harassing the people.

The guards at Mergoi were stunned on seeing the bungalow empty on 29th November 1885. They looked towards the sea but the Satguru could not be seen anywhere. To avoid public ridicule, the Deputy Commissioner conspired with the Civil Surgeon to declare him dead.

On 29th November, 1885 the Civil Surgeon of Mergoi wrote to the Deputy Commissioner that "the death of state prisoner Ram Singh, which event has taken place just this moment 4.30 P.M. The man has been in decline sometime past and with the setting in of the cold weather, he has had another attack of diorrhoea.....I beg also to report to you that I have arranged for the cremation of the body at about 8 o'clock tomorrow morning and that I shall be present at the burial place." On 2nd December, 1885, it was reported that the ashes were collected and immersed in water. This was conveyed through telegram on 8th December 1885.

A government report from the jail nailed the lie. According to which, no detainee in Mergoi had died of loose motions or diaorrhea in 1885.¹⁷

During this period, King Bibu of Burma stepped up his war against the British. He was put under house arrest on 29 November 1885 at Madras (Chennai). The same date did not look like a coincidence.

It further turned out to be a white lie when Sir Charles Burnard told the British spy Attar Singh Bhadaur on 23rd August 1886 that Ram Singh Kuka was shifted to a far off place so that it became difficult to establish contact with him.

The news about Satguru Ram Singh's death was totally rejected by Satguru Hari Singh demanding that his bed, pitcher like metal vessal and his recitation books be handed over to him. But

how could they produce these things? These were with Satguru Ram Singh who was shifted to a far off place.

The Kukas had stepped up their political activities being in contact with the Satguru. Burma apparently looked unconcerned. Therefore, the Kukas became more confident. The Bright Glowing Light prevailed. With the shifting of the Satguru to a far off place, his search became all the more difficult. But there was always a ray of hope.

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THE WAR WENT ON

THE KUKAS WERE feeling suffocating because of the harsh attitude of the government towards them but they never bowed before it. Once Baba Santokh Singh, the author of 'Satguru Bilas' went to Lahore from Bhaini Sahib. He stood before the Commissioner's Court in the afternoon holding a flambeau. When the visitors to the Court asked the Baba ji about this action, he replied that "he was trying to show the path of justice to the blind. They have arrested innocent Guru Ram Singh. They do not even reply to our letters." He moved to Amritsar from there and later to Ludhiana. He used to hold a flambeau and repeat that "the rulers are blind." The Ludhiana police Superintendent J.P. Warburton called him and let him go only after a stern warning. Baba ji went on saying that, "We have to set you right."

From among those who were arrested along with the Satguru and kept at different places, Suba Sahib Singh died in 1879. Suba Jawahar Singh and Suba Pahara Singh died in 1882 and Suba Lakha Singh in 1903. In 1884 Suba Rur Singh left for heavenly abode. Subas Kahan Singh, Brahma Singh, Man Singh, Pahara Singh and Maluk Singh were let off and allowed to go to Punjab with the condition that they would not go to Bhaini Sahib and would not indulge in rebellious preachings.

The Government was not complacent. It kept a vigil over 252 listed "dangerous Kukas" from all districts according to a list as on 31st December 1880. With a relaxation from the Government, Satguru Hari Singh started visiting other places. But the Government used to cancel his visits even after giving permission.

Whenever J.P. Warburton got information about the Kukas assembling at any place or in a grove he used to raid the place, search them and recover copies of the Hukamnamas. He arrested Ishar Singh in 1878, Narain Singh in 1879 and also arrested Mangal

Singh Raiyan. He confiscated copies of several Hukamnamas from Mai Attri on 19th March 1881. He got these translated into English and was stunned to read about the British action and about developments in Russia, Kabul and various States of Punjab.¹

Dr. Ganda Singh wrote about the activities of the Kukas in one paper: "It would not be out of place to mention that the zeal of the Kukas was not seen in 1883 alone but it was at peak even in 1878 and remained so till 1886 and beyond. Maharaja Dalip Singh was still in England when a Kuka leader met him there. In Government reports he is defined as Banarsi Das or Banarsi Babu."² (Basant issue of 'Satyug', 2022 Bikrmi)

His name in Agra, Mathura and Meerut was mentioned as Banarsi Das and in Bengal as Banarsi Babu. On return to India, he prepared the ground for Dalip Singh and collected money for his cause.

Maharaja Dalip Singh wrote a letter on 25 March 1886 to the Panth that "I would live like an ordinary citizen on my return and embrace Sikhism on reaching Mumbai."

He hardly knew that the Sikh Sardars had turned faithful to the British. According to Piara Singh Padam:

"In 1886, Maharaja Dalip Singh cried hard to come back home but the Singh Sabha Executive opposed it. The Sikh Sardars replied on 30th October. You cannot be helped. You go to London and beg pardon."³

(Brief Sikh History)

Dr. Jagjit Singh's quotation was not out of place: "We the entire Khalsa Panth and residents of Gujranwala with whom you claim to have common motherland replied to your letter that you had not done a wise thing in revolting against the British government. Whosoever among us is having even an iota of wisdom, would not talk of helping you. Do not lay any hopes on us."⁴

(Tract, Singh Sabha Lahore)

As ordained by the Satguru, Kuka Sikhs remained in touch with Maharaja Dalip Singh. He left England and stayed for a few months in France. Finally, he reached Moscow in the beginning of 1887 with the help of Russian Generals. Bishan Singh was already there. The Kukas were convinced that both of them put together will work for the independence of the country.

The government felt that Banarsi Das was very dangerous. He was originally a Khatri resident of Lucknow. An officer in the police office in Kolkatta Sir H. L. Harrison wrote to F.B. Peacock on 11 April 1887 in a demi official letter that "There is a man called Banarsi Babu, a Kuka Sikh now in Calcutta (Kolkatta) living in the Sikh quarters and is daily preaching sedition. He was the Guru of Dalip Singh and lived with him for a short time in England."

At his persuasion, Dalip Singh went to Russia and became active to get back his father Maharaja Ranjit Singh's kingdom. All concerned were alerted in Calcutta (Kolkatta) and Lahore through telegrams or demi official letters. Alert was also sounded about another person S. Thakur Singh. Foreign office also became vigilant.

However, representatives of 25 Singh Sabhas of Sikh Sardars loyal to the British gave in writing that they would remain faithful to the Maharani. Among them were some position holders in Khalsa Dewan. Kukas supported Dalip Singh and revolt went on.

Mai Attri from Maisar Khana was arrested in 1885 for possessing copies of Satguru's Hukamnamas and lodged in Patiala jail. Suba Khushhal Singh from Thraj went to meet her in jail. The Mai reached Bhaini Sahib in 1885 after being released from jail. Dan Singh handed over the keys of the Dera to her. In the same year, Khushhal Singh, alongwith his two daughters Jiwan Kaur and Fateh Kaur visited Bhaini Sahib. Mother Sahib Kaur, wife of Guru Hari Singh had died at the residence of Satguru Hari Singh in 1882. Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal wrote:

"Prayers were recited for Guru Hari Singh and mother Jiwan Kaur". The Prayer was conducted by Suba Sher Singh Dafarke.

Mother Jiwan Kaur gave birth to a pious child before sun set on the 3rd dark lunar day in the first Bikarmi month (*Chet Vadi*) of 1946 Bikarmi year, corresponding to 9th March, 1890.

The Satguru was in the Ramsar *Kothi*. The Sikhs conveyed the news to him. He opined, "The owner of the house has taken birth. He will be a celebrity and a warrior." *Gur* was distributed freely among all those residing in the Dera, visitors to the Dera, villagers, police sepoy and Havildars. The Holy son was baptized by Bhai Wazir Singh from Pandori.

The mother and the child were administered *Khande-di-Pahul - Amrit* on 21st March 1890 and he was named Partap Singh. On 17th April Sant Hazara Singh from Takhat Hazara again administered *Amrit* to the child and the general public was allowed to have a glimpse of the prince.

It took no time for the news to reach the masses about the birth of the son. People used to come for a glimpse but were afraid of the police action. Sant Lal Singh Bhure Gill came from Amritsar with a large group but the police rebuke put a spanner in their joy. The mother bribed the police with precious food and assuaged the feelings of the Sant also and gave him something to eat from the *Langar* (community kitchen).

Mother Jiwan Kaur gave birth to her younger son on 15 October 1892. He was named Nihal Singh.

About 30 to 40 Kukas settled at Bhaini Sahib Ramsar and their families started residing there. Thereafter, the Sikhs who had dragged their feet off Ferozepur and Sialkot after Guru's visits, once again turned to the Guru and their numbers went on increasing.

More people started visiting Bhaini Sahib. An animal driven grinding machine was needed to meet the demand for flour. Technician Thakur Singh Bathawal set up the machine and made it functional in three days and it started working from 28th September, 1895.

The Satguru used to hold religious congregations after

obtaining permission from the Government. He used to have 9 Groups of reciters of hymns and prayer sayers with him.

In 1897, the Satguru received the good news that Mother Jiwan Kaur had given birth to another son on 5th October, 1897 while he was on a visit to Sialkot and was celebrating Diwali festival at Amritsar. He was named Gurdial Singh.

When the government put a tax on the business community, the Jaildar and the Clerk listed the Gurudwara as a business centre. The Tehsildar found during an investigation that there was only community kitchen in the Gurudwara. He reported that no business was transacted there.

The Government considered other Sikhs (non-Namdharis) as alligned to it but not the Satguru. One day during his Gujranwala visit, the Deputy Commissioner J.R. Drumenda and Police Superintendent called him and asked how he was different from the other Sikhs. The Satguru told them that, "They take meat and drink and indulge in womanizing. We try to stop all these vices. We believe in piety, *chanting of Naam* (recitation) and reading from the scriptures. This is the main difference."

India faced a major drought in 1899 and it was the worst period for Punjab. The nomadic tribe from Rajasthan left their homes and carried their animals in search of food and fodder. 12,000 of these nomads plundered foodgrains at Sangrur and openly said that if they were arrested, they would atleast get food. The nomads from Bikaner turned to Bhaini Sahib. Community kitchen was continuing at that place. Therefore, the number of those wanting to have food rose to 600 at a time. But all got cooked pulses, chapaties and a mixture of cooked rice and pulses.

An application was given to the Deputy Commission to allow a four month tour for raising funds. The authorities replied that the nomads should not be served food and be turned away by force. After all, they were weak in physique.

The Satguru said "We have not sent an invitation to them and if they had come, they would not be stopped from taking food.

It is Satguru's community kitchen. It would go on." And the community kitchen went on. In the words of Prof. Kirpal Singh Kasel: "In the face of this adversity, Satguru Hari Singh threw open the doors of Satguru Ram Singh's *Langar* (community kitchen) to all. They went on providing food, money and other essential items to these famine hit nomads, who were reaching Bhaini Sahib in thousands. Their cattle were also fed on fodder."⁶

The community kitchens set up by the Government and the states closed down. The news about the non stop running of the community kitchen at Bhaini Sahib reached Lord Curzon through the district and the state. This information was conveyed to London. The Deputy Commissioner visited Bhaini Sahib appreciating the ongoing community kitchen and offered allotment of land. According to Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal:

"The British were pleased and said this type of community kitchen was not to be seen anywhere else. It was praised everywhere, including London. The British authorities offered to allot 52 tracts of land. The Guru Ji replied that these lands are our own. In any case we would get these back.....If at all you wanted to allot some land, it should be given from England. That silenced the British officer."⁷ (Satguru Bilas Part II)

With failing eyesight, the Satguru used to have unbearable pain in the upper back. The Satguru ordained in the presence of Magha Singh Bilaspur, Gurdit Singh Moron, Mahant Seva Singh Sudhari Majra that they should follow Partap Singh.

On 17th May 1906, the unexpected happened. Satguru Hari Singh breathed his last. He was no more. Satguru Hari Singh who always consoled the people that he would enable them to have a glimpse of Satguru Ram Singh left them for ever. The masses groped in the dark. Satguru's mortal remains were consigned to flames. People sobbed and remembered him through out the night. Next day, at the time of morning *Asa di Var* recitation Bir Singh Chunni and Tikka Hira Singh put up a seat. Young Satguru Partap Singh occupied the seat. Both of them bowed before him and paid

their respects. All others who were present, the sadhus, Baba Narain Singh Rode, Sant Gurdit Singh Moron, Mahant Seva Singh and the son of Bibi Nandan were among the first to pay their obeisance to the Satguru. The entire atmosphere was filled with the presence of the Satguru. Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana Dewan Chand Arora and his deputy Bhagwan Singh expressed their condolences and sympathies at the death of the Satguru.

The congregation held in memory of the Satguru at the Nimani festival on 3rd June 1906 and the large attendance thereon was a pointer to the British government that they would have no compromise with the government. Their struggle for freedom would continue despite the police post.

Sumit Sarkar wrote in his book 'Modern India' (1885-1947) that the Kukas had been described as freedom fighters here and there but their activities were an attack on Islam. This observation is not correct, because:

- i.) The attacks against the butchers were a step to oppose the government policy. If these had been against the Islam, these would have continued for ever.
- ii.) The government should not have arrested the leaders of the Kukas and should not have set up a police post at Bhaini Sahib.
- iii.) Muslims would never have been the supporters of the Kuka movement. In the 1892 census, there was a mention of 10,541 Sikh, 690 Hindu Kukas as well as five Muslim Kukas.

During the British rule in the 19th century, several movements began for social awakening and social and religious reforms. These are being briefly mentioned here. It appeared these movements were influenced by the British education system.

The founder of the Brahmo Samaj Raja Ram Mohan Roy was influenced by the Western thinking. He was a staunch believer of the description of God mentioned in the Upnishads. Later,

Rabindra Nath Tagore instilled a new enthusiasm in the society. Keshav Chandra Sen spread it far and wide outside Bengal to U.P., Punjab, Madras and Mumbai. The society was against self immolation of women at the husband's pyre and untouchability and was in favour of widow remarriage.

It was named as Prarthana Sabha in Mumbai. They believed in deed instead of blind faith. They believed that the service to their children was the service to God. In Punjab, Dayal Singh Trust was the replica of Brahmo Samaj. It favoured Western education.

Swami Daya Nand was the founder of the Arya Samaj. He understood the traditional Indian thinking and preached it. He believed in deeds and not in destiny. He preached the Vedas and opted for the holy fire tradition. D.A.V. organizations had their origin in Arya Samaj and were supporters of the British education system.

Ramakrishna Mission is based on old traditional thinking. It rejected the Hindu point of view of 'Untouchability'.

Theosophical movement represents the influence of the Eastern or in other words the Indian thinking. The Russia-Germany born Madam H.P. Blavatski carried this movement to the United States of America in 1875. It was influenced by Upnishads, Vedas and Yoga line of thinking. Madam Annie Besant popularized it in India.

Shah Vahiullah was the founder of Vahabi movement of the Muslims in India. He wanted harmony among all four holy sects of the Muslims and believed in a decision on the basis of self prudence where the Quaran and Hadis failed to show the path. It was initially against the Sikh rule but ultimately turned hostile to the British rulers.

The founder of the Aligarh movement Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan wanted to change the Muslim thinking from the traditional to modern. He was against worldly and spiritual leadership and strongly advocated supporting the British rule.

In Punjab, Singh Sabha movement believed in his ideals. The Sikhs in Punjab strongly believed that they were not Hindus and the Hindu organizations described the Sikhs as Hindus with long hair. The tension between the two mounted.

Apart from the Vahabis, no other movement confronted the British. However, stray incidents went on happening.

In Bengal, the indigo cultivators, who were mainly British, committed excesses against the poor labourers. Utterly disgusted at their plight, the villagers in Jayoram Pur village decided that they will not cultivate indigo crop. Fifty thousand people stood against the repression despite burning of their huts. The British landlords were forced to leave their bungalows and the condition of the labourers improved.

The Santhals revolted in the 19th century which was the direct consequence of their heavy indebtedness by the Bengali landlords, businessmen and money lenders through treacherous means. The Bengal Chief Commissioner felt that their revolt under the leadership of Bhagrut from 1871-75 was political.

Vasudev Balwant Rao Phalke from Pune was influenced and turned a revolutionary under the influence of the Pune celebrations by Ranade. He believed that the rail, education system and roads built by the British were for the enhancement of their trade and not for the benefit of India. He put on swadeshi clothes and instigated the Ramoshi tribe against the British. He put obstructions in rail and postal services. The government arrested him and jailed him in Aden Fort. He escaped but was arrested again and was feet and hand cuffed. This brave Indian died of hunger and disease on 17th February 1883.

Political Associations were formed in Bengal, Mumbai and Madras states. The Congress leadership of these Associations was from among those from Mumbai and Kolkatta who had gathered in London between 1860 and 1870. They studied for I.C.S. or Law. Among them were Feroze Shah Mehta, Baddruddin Tayyebji, W.C. Bonnerji, Manmohan, Lal Mohan Ghosh, Surendra

Nath Bannerji, Anand Mohan Bose and Ramesh Chander Dutt. They were all under the influence of London settled trader Dadabhai Nauroji. Those like Surendra Nath who did not go for the Civil Services job, were thrown out.

The time went on. In 1885, a retired government officer A.O. Hume set up the Congress party which was the brain child of Viceroy Lord Dufferin. To save the administration from the peoples' ire, Dufferin wanted an organization which would tell him about the peoples' feelings. Showing his anger, Lala Lajpat Rai described it as a 'safety valve' to let off the pent up feelings:

"It was meant not only to save the British rule from any impending danger which threatened it but also to make it powerful.....To ameliorate the political woes and move India forward in the political field was only a supplementary thinking and a secondary issue." Hume was a clever imperialist.

The writing in the District Gazetteer, Ludhiana in 1904 that,"The truth is that it is not possible for a Kuka to be a loyal subject of the British Govt." put a seal on their patriotism.

The mention about Dalip Singh Namdhari in the Encyclopaedia Britanica 1902, which states that:

- Kukas do not tell a lie.
- Kukas do not drink
- Kukas are the staunch Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh
- Kukas can never be faithful to the British.⁸

All others had been described as the 'most obedient of the Queen.'

The continuance of the Police Post at Bhaini Sahib which went on committing repression does not leave even an iota of doubt that in the 19th and 20th centuries, Kukas were the only ones who kept the fight for country's freedom alive. Their third Guru Satguru Partap Singh took over the command on 17th May 1906.

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CARAVAN GAINED STRENGTH

THE FOCAL POINT of the strength of the Kukas is their tenacity, faith and spiritual power. Worship is the key to their spiritual power. The prayer also inspires to pay obeisance to the Guru, bow before him and always remember him. In July 1906, Satguru Pratap Singh while heading the Kuka movement put up his temporary abode for one and one quarter of a month at the banks of Sirhind canal near Neelon. He slept very little and reduced intake of food and increased the time for meditation and recitation of Gurbani.

In 1914, the government razed to the ground a wall of Gurudwara Rakab Ganj. Kuka leader Mangal Singh Fatuhi Chak (Arshi Farishta) was the first to raise his voice against it. The Akhand Kirtani Jatha (Group) of Bhai Randhir Singh opened a morcha against it. Poet Sardul Singh joined him in this struggle. The entire Sikh Panth showed exemplary solidarity for the cause and forced the Government to re-construct the wall. Master Tara Singh said in one of his speeches:

“I met Baba ji (Satguru Partap Singh) for the first time in 1914. When the wall of Rakab Ganj was demolished, the seeds of the Akali movement were sown. I and Teja Singh Samundari presented ourselves before the Babaji for any service. We discussed the entire issue with him. He organized a massive congregation in Lahore, which was the need of the hour. It got unparalleled response.”¹

(Shardhanjli issue of ‘Satjug, 1959 Bikrami)

Sant Kesar Singh Mushava was the soul behind the famous patriot Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna. Bhakna himself wrote, “He lured me to nationalism which became my passion in the years to come.”

(My Autobiography)

Baba Bhakna was the head of the Gaddar Party formed in Canada for achieving independence for India.

On 21st April 1913, the central organization of the non resident Indian workers in America and Canada was named as 'Hindi Association of Pacific Coast'. Babaji was its President, Lala Hardial General Secretary and Pandit Kashi Ram was Treasurer. They published the 'Gaddar' paper. Its editions also came out in Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali and Hindi. The paper 'The Echo of Gaddar' became so popular that many people took inspiration to become literate in order to read the paper.

On 4th April 1914, a ship with 374 passengers from Hongkong who travelled in search of work and livelihood was not permitted to dock at Victoria port in Canada and Navy police arrested them. It was forced to return to India and docked at Baj Baj port in Bengal. When passengers started getting down, they were greeted with indiscriminate firing. Gurdit Singh and some other passengers escaped. The Government tried to take decrees from the priests, leaders, Sardars and Singh Sabha members that the passengers were not Sikhs. Satguru Partap Singh ji held a meeting of a select group of Sikhs in order to inspire the Sikhs. Though the priests of the Takhats and leaders were acting as saviours of the government, yet the Satguru was able to get a Resolution adopted at the Hoshiarpur meeting that the passengers were Sikh martyrs. The group was sympathetic to the families of the martyrs.

The government came to know that the head of the Kukas, a rebel organisation was responsible for instigating the Sikhs. Therefore, he was always an eyesore for them.

In December 1913, a day was very auspicious for the Namdharis. Satguru Partap Singh was married on this day to Bibi Veeran (mata Bhupinder Kaur) at Gurusar in Ferozepur district. This was the first marriage of its kind of any Satguru solemnized in accordance with Guru's percepts. So far all marriages were solemnized according to Hindu traditions and rituals. It was also an inter caste marriage.

The First World War broke out in 1914. The British were in great need of Indian armymen to fight for them. They asked political leaders, including Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, religious heads, social activists and the kings, landlords, traders etc. to recruit or force people for recruitment in the army.

The Sikhs in Punjab were led astray by their leaders. According to Sohan Singh Josh, Punjab alone contributed 90,000 soldiers. The authorities visited the Satguru at Bhaini Sahib. The Satguru told them, “You thank your stars that I am not raising my voice against you. I am not going to help you in this matter.” None of the Kuka Sikhs opted for recruitment in the army.

All except the revolutionary Indian leaders hoped to get rewards in some or the other form once the war was over. In the words of Sumit Sarkar, “In 1918, Tilak and Gandhi, during their long marches across the villages, went to the extent of collecting funds and getting people recruited to fight for the British. They helped the government as they felt that it would give them political freedom in return for their services. Tilak argued that people should buy war debentures feeling that they are investing in the decree for home rule.”²

(Modern India)

But contrary to it, the Jalianwala massacre happened. According to Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, 1,300 people, Sikhs and non Sikhs, including Namdharis were brutally killed by opening indiscriminate firing. The perpetrator of this heinous crime was honoured with a Siropa (a robe of honour) at the Akal Takhat for being faithful.

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha was a staunch patriot. Mai Mahatma (the only woman Suba Hukami appointed by Satguru Ram Singh) was the motivator of the Maharaja to patriotism. The Maharaja was not blessed with a heir. At the persuasion of Mai Mahatma, he approached Satguru Partap Singh for blessing him with a son. He was blessed with a prince in 1919. He was named crown prince Partap Singh.

The Maharaja offered the Satguru a large amount, horses, 5,800 Bighas (1,281 acres) of land in Madardu forest and one Rolles Royce car. This was unpalatable for the other side. They blamed the Maharaja and the Queen of being anti British. The Administrator of Nabha wrote to the Agent of the Governor General on 8th December 1924:

“The mother of the crown prince (Prince Partap Singh) the younger Queen (Sarojini Devi) is a Kuka. The crown prince is also respected as the incarnation of the 11th Guru. For years, the Kukas possibly had been anti British. They were mischief makers and disloyal. So far they had their centre at Bhaini Sahib in Ludhiana district. The Madardu forest is not very far from Bhaini Sahib. If I correctly recollect, the distance between the two is hardly 15 miles. I feel the Kukas have done it deliberately to gain strength outside British territory.”³

Every year, the Kukas gathered at a place pre decided by the Satguru for the Hola Mohalla (celebration of the festival of colours). At this congregation, alongwith the recitations of hymns and from the scriptures, views were exchanged on religious, social and political matters. As per the direction of Satguru Partap Singh, the 1920 Hola Mohalla was held at village Varan in Shekhupura district. The Namdhari or the Kuka sect mouthpiece weely newspaper “Satjug” began its first publication on the occasion. Maharaja Gurdial Singh and activists Nirankar Singh Chetan and Mangal Singh Arsi Farishta were instrumental in its publication. Its aim was the spread of brotherhood and to create awareness about the Kuka movement and its rituals and to guage peoples’ inclination towards non-cooperation with the British. The Satguru asked all the Kukas to subscribe to it and persuade others to do so in order to ensure that good reading material about the Kukas reached every household. The government stooges opposed it.

Mata Bhupinder Kaur gave birth to a princely son of Satguru Partap Singh on 22nd November 1920. Bhaini Sahib was still having a police post and the Gurudwara was virtually like a jail of cruel Kans. But it was for certain that very soon seize would be lifted.

The restrictions, jails and police posts would not be able to stop the fragrant air from blowing in. The birth of the prince was an occasion of rejoicing for the entire Kuka sect. He grew up walking with his tender feet sometimes holding the finger of Balkavi Beant ji and at others that of the elder Baba ji. He took over the seat of the spiritual and temporal headship as Satguru Jagjit Singh after Satguru Partap Singh left for his heavenly abode in 1959.

The Sikhs were in high spirits after reconstruction of the wall of Rakab Ganj. Sikh leaders took the behaviour of the priests holding control over the historic gurudwaras, the rituals followed by them and the misuse of money offered by the devotees at the gurudwaras as against the tenets of Sikhism and Guru's teachings. Therefore, they wanted to get rid of the gurudwaras from the control of these priests. They set up Management Committees after dislodging the priests of Akal Takhat Sahib, Sri Harimandir Sahib, Taran Taran Sahib, etc. of control of these gurudwaras. Their aim was a similar action at Nankana Sahib. The Satguru returned the keys offered by the priest of Nankana Sahib.

In October, 1920, a resolution was adopted at the congregation at village Dharewal, district Shekhupura to bring in reforms at Nankana Sahib gurudwara. The Shiromani Committee wanted to discuss the matter in this regard with its priest. But they were armed and ready for a confrontation. He engaged 28 armed Pathans for protection and kept ready three to four hundred notorious people for action. He was ready to go to any extent.

When they learnt about his intentions, those who wanted peace tried to stop the Sikhs from going to Nankana Sahib to avoid bloodshed. Despite that, a group of 150 Sikhs led by Bhai Lachhman Singh, Dalip Singh and Tehal Singh reached the Gurudwara at about five a.m. on 21st February with the sole intention of paying obeisance at the Gurudwara. They were greeted with indiscriminate firing by the enemies of humanism, leaving them bleeding. The bodies were collected and burnt by pouring kerosene oil over them. Many injured were also burnt alive. The entire Sikh community raised its voice against it. A large group of about 2,200

Sikhs under the leadership of Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar went ahead despite warnings by the British officers and the Deputy Commissioner and took control of the gurudwara.

The Kuka sect mouthpiece 'Satjug' described the happenings as tragic and painful. The news about the death of 195 persons and seriously injured 5 was given a prime column space in the 23rd February issue. The 2nd March 1921 issue came out as the Nanakana Sahib Martyrs' issue. A few lines from a poem published in it were:

“They were great, greater and the greatest
who sacrificed their lives
at Nankana Sahib.
On seeing the sins going on there
they sacrificed their lives
in the protection of the Gurudwara.
They were butchered mercilessly
they offered their lives smilingly.”⁴

A group of 19 Sikhs led by Nidhan Singh Alim from Nizampur Deva Singhwala Chak number 38 joined the martyrs' column. 15 of these martyrs were Kuka Sikhs. Devinder Singh Gill Jianatha gives their names as follows:

1. Bhai Tehal Singh 2. Bhai Surain Singh 3. Bhai Bagga Singh 4. Bhai Harnam Singh 5. Bhai Dal Singh 6. Bhai Kesar Singh 7. Bhai Bhagwan Singh 8. Bhai Jawala Singh 9. Bhai Khushhal Singh 10. Bhai Jawand Singh 11. Bhai Punjab Singh 12. Bhai Narain Singh 13. Bhai Ram Singh 14. Bhai Sunder Singh 15. Bhai Bhag Singh.⁵

(Gurgaddi Centenary issue 2000 of the 'Satjug')

The bloody massacre of Jalianwala Bagh and the imposition of Marshal Law in its aftermath shook the Indian political leadership. They realized that things were not going to be easy for them. Therefore, the policy of compromise was replaced by Satyagraha and civil disobedience. In 1920, the front runner of radical leaders

in Maharashtra Bal Ganngadhar Tilak declared in a full throated voice, "Freedom is my birth right and I would definitely get it." Rabindranath Tagore returned the knighthood of 'Sir' conferred on him by the government.

Mahatma Gandhi began the non-cooperation movement. Congress approved the policy of non-cooperation and non-violence at its Nagpur session in December 1920. Armed with these principles, Satguru Ram Singh had lit the freedom torch for which he was externed. The government took every step possible to crush the Kuka uprising.

Satguru Partap Singh ji set up the Namdhari Darbar (an Organisation) in 1921 at Hola Mohalla in Mukatsar to coordinate activities with other political and independent organizations engaged in freedom struggle. Gurdial Singh was nominated as its Head. A 32 member executive of politically mature leaders was set up. More active among them were: Nidhan Singh Alim, Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta, Pandit Basant Singh Bhadana, Inder Singh Chakravarty, Surat Singh Bhikshu, Pandit Mansha Singh, Kesar Singh Chavinda, Daya Singh Kakkar, Bhagat Singh Datewal, Khazan Singh Majhabi, etc. The Satguru donated 10,000 rupees to the Darbar for its initial expenses.

During the Hola Mohalla, 26 Subas were appointed for propagation of the Namdhari sect and the code of conduct.

In 1921, a congregation was organized under the aegis of Satguru Partap Singh in memory of Namdhari martyrs. It was held at Muthada Kalan in Jalandhar district from 17th to 19th January. A big conference was organized on the occasion. Maharaj Gurdial Singh, Maharaj Nihal Singh, Nidhan Singh Alim, Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta were very active in organising this conference. The Satguru presided over the conference. According to Alim, prominent among those who participated in the conference were: Chaudhary Rambhaj Dutt, Maulana Sayyed Habib Editor 'Siasat' Lahore, Chaudhary Gulam Haider, Lala Kedar Nath Sehgal, (Shaheed-e-Azam) Bhagat Singh and his father Kishan Singh, Mehta Anand

Kishore Lahore, Sardar Singh Editor 'Khalsa' Lahore, Inder Singh Chakravarty, Pandit Basant Singh Bhadana, Pandit Amar Singh, Sant Ankha Singh, etc. Suba Sahia Singh was its Chief Organiser. A voice was raised at this conference against the repression of the Kukas by the British government.

The next conference was held at Siarh in Ludhiana district. Sant Nidhan Singh Alim who was a member of the All India Congress Committee presided over the conference. In his words:

“This conference is unique in the history of politics. Non-cooperation Movement was at its peak and many big leaders participated in this conference. A resolution was adopted to get vacated the Police post in front of the Bhaini Sahib Gurudwara. To achieve this end it was decided to prepare groups for the agitation in this regard. A large group under the leadership of Maharaja Gurdial Singh was active in the freedom struggle in close coordination with the Congress.”⁶

(Malvendra's Preface)

Similar conferences were held at Sankhatre and Hoshiarpur.

Maharaj Gurdial Singh participated in the 1922 All India Congress session at Mumbai along with prominent Kuka Sikhs. In his address, the Maharaj explained in detail about the sacrifices by the Kuka movement and the oppression by the British.

The British government was kept on its toes by the Akali Morchas in Punjab. Guru ka Bagh Morcha was a big headache for them. The freedom fighters did not allow the British to heave a sigh of relief in India. The government was terrified that in case the resistance movement (Satyagraha) spread to Bhaini Sahib, it would add to their woes. It felt that politically it would be unwise to continue the police post at Bhaini Sahib. It also felt that by this action, Kukas would be segregated from other classes. The Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana wrote a letter on 12 May 1923 addressed to Satguru Partap Singh, which read as follows:

Office of the Deputy Commissioner
Ludhiana district.

dated : 12 May, 1923

Local Guru Sahib

My Greetings

The government has taken a decision to discontinue the police post at Bhaini Sahib. But it would be removed on an experimental basis in the first instance. If the priests at the Gurudwara or visitors indulge in any sort of unwanted activity in future or would give shelter to criminals or absconders, the government would be constrained to set up the post again.

Yours sincerely

Sd/-

P.C. Hilton

Deputy Commissioner
Ludhiana

His Holiness Maharaja Partap Singh ji,
Bhaini Sahib, Post Office Hiran,
Via Ludhiana⁷

A look at the history of India would reveal without doubt that many movements began and struggled for India's independence and on other issues. They organized resistance movements (Satyagraha), went to jails, were mercilessly beaten and suffered beatings with long sticks by the British, underwent torture at cellular jail in Andamans, suffered in jails for years, were blown up by cannons and were hanged till death. But no movement suffered as much as the Kuka movement. Nowhere, a police post kept a vigil at the headquarters of a movement for half a century as it did at the headquarters of Kuka movement. None else was considered as dangerous as the Kuka movement.

The Kukas never felt obliged to the government for lifting the post. They also did not waiver from the path of patriotism and religion. They supported every movement that opposed the British.

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NEARER TO DESTINATION

THE GOVERNMENT OF India dethroned Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, the King of Nabha who was a staunch patriot. The reason for his removal was his personal enmity against the Maharaja of Patiala, who was faithful to the British.

In the words of Ram Singh Majitha:

“The dethroning of Maharaja Nabha was a political issue. He was having patriotic views and was an eyesore to the British government since the time of his accession to the throne. He never subjected himself to the government as Maharaja Patiala (Bhupinder Singh) did.”¹

(Punjab in India's Struggle for Independence, Part I)

Maharaja Nabha was dethroned on 9 July 1923. A non-stop recitation from the scriptures (*Akhand Path*) was organised from 25th to 27th August, 1923 at Gurudwara Gangsar at Jaiton in this connection. The police arrested Inder Singh Maur while he was reciting from the scriptures during the Akhand Path on the 27th and created problems for itself. A political agitation began as a mark of protest. The Sikhs offered themselves for arrest. The British tried all sorts of conspiracies to divide the Sikh organizations.

The Government wanted to take over from the Kukas the Madardu forest which was also known as Nabha forest (*beerh*). The government action softened because of the agitation. Shamsheer Singh Ashok writes:

The Chief Secretary to the Governor General Mr. Kark directed the Administrator of Nabha Mr. Uglavi that the forest land which Maharaja Nabha had given to the Namdharis should not be taken back from them so that the Namdharis did not support the Akalis in their agitation. But the Namdharis saw through this trick and despite their differences with the Akalis, they helped them a lot in the Nabha agitation.”²

(Akali Movement and Jaiton Agitation)

A copy of the letter to Uglavi is given below:

Governor Punjab
2.8.1923

My dear Uglavi

We have come to know from Amritsar about the Namdhari movement in Nabha and that you intended to cancel and forfeit the title of the land and the forest area given to the Namdharis by the former Maharaja and that they are really worried over it.

Any action of this type by you would be instrumental in bringing the Namdhari Sikhs closer to the Akalis. They were staunch enemies of each other so far because of the Taran Taran communal clash. I would like to suggest you that any action about the Namdhari land and about Nabha movement be deferred till such time that the Akali agitation is controlled. I hope, your action about this land is not of immediate in nature.

Yours Sincerely
H.D. Karek

To
Respected C.M.G. Uglavi
Administrator
Nabha State.³

The Namdhari Sikhs were fully aware of the British policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Therefore, there was nobody to support the government.

The government tried another trick. It took out a procession of its stooges in the garb of Namdharis and Nirmala saints against the Akalis. But the people saw through the trick and the government was exposed. According to Shamsheer Singh Ashok:

"The fourth attempt by the government to give a tactical defeat to the Akalis was to take out a procession against the Akalis of a few Nirmalas, Nihangs and the Namdharis. But it did not succeed as several Nirmalas and Namdharis who believed in the

Sikh Panth joined the martyrdom jathas of the Akalis and the members of the second group of the Shiromani Gurudwara Parbhandhak Committee who were arrested without a warrant. The fiftififth member was S. Dharam Singh who was a Namdhari gentleman.”⁴

(Akali Movement and Jaiton Agitation)

Sant Budha Singh Namdhari Chhoti Makhi in Lahore district was arrested at Jaiton and Mehtab Singh Namdhari offered himself to be arrested in the Guru ka Bagh Morcha.

According to Giani Tarlok Singh, the Namdhari Darbar passed a Resolution in favour of the Morcha and for its success. The Resolution said:

“The Namdhari Darbar was constrained at the painful events of Jaiton and the Darbar consider the state action as the most disdainful.....The Namdhari Darbar feels that only an open enquiry into the events could bring out the truth. It again congratulates the Martyrs’ Jatha of the Akalis for their brave action. It prays to the Almighty Lord to give solace to their souls in His heavenly abode.”⁵

(Contemporary Sikh History)

The ‘Satjug’ paper in one of its issues in 1934 demanded as to why injustice was being meted out to Maharaja Nabha?

“The people who had openly indulged in the propaganda against the government are being freed in all the states. What is the sin committed by Maharaja Gurcharan Singh that his punishment was not coming to an end? The Maharaja had been the victim of government excesses for over 14 years. Even those imprisoned for life are set free in this period.”⁶

(‘Satjug’ 25 Asad 1991

Bikrami)

A day of rejoicing came in the Kuka movement when mother Bhupinder Kaur gave birth to another Prince in October 1923. His chubby body hastened mother Fateh Kaur to name him Bir Singh.

In 1924, Satguru Partap Singh thought of a plan to meditate in seclusion. He wanted to go to Russia in search of Satguru Ram Singh ji. He reached Aswar Ghat from Ropar, walking leisurely without carrying any utility item. He reached Bilaspur from there for a temporary halt.

He knew that Roerick, the son-in-law of the Russian Czar was residing in a garden house near Rohtang Pass. He wanted to meet him to go to Russia via China.

There was a decoity at Bijoura. The government suspected the Punjabis for it. Therefore, it jailed Punjabis suspecting them to be decoits. Considering the situation as grave, the Satguru returned and reached the meditation place at Neelon canal. He visited Bhaini Sahib from there one night in 1924 to see mother Bhupinder Kaur who was suffering from tuberculosis. She left for her heavenly abode on 14th September, 1924.

In 1924, the government charged Queen Sarojini Devi as a Kuka and hatched new conspiracies to torture the Kukas. The Kukas werenot afraid of it and were fighting an open war for country's independence.

The Congress opened a resistance movement against the British government in 1925 setting up its centre at Bredla Hall, Lahore. Politically, all others considered every aspect of going with the government or oppose it before joining the Congress but Namdharis were staunch patriots for generations. The British also never considered them as their confidant. The Kukas also never acted under cover. When the time came for offering arrests, the Panth leaders Sant Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta, Nidhan Singh Aalim, Pandit Mansha Singh Kaumi and Milkha Singh, etc. were the torch bearers. This energized the Kukas with enthusiasm.

Maharaja Gurdial Singh participated in the Kolkatta session of the Congress party. He informed the session, in detail about the patriotism and sacrifices made by the Kukas for country's freedom.

A large congregation of the Kukas was held at Muthada in Jallandhar district in 1927 with permission from Satguru Partap

Singh ji. The congregation was held in memory of the Malerkotla martyrs. Several political leaders participated in it at the invitation of Maharaja Gurdial Singh. Its main speaker was the Maharaja himself. Other leaders also openly spoke against the British government policies and their ill intentions. It turned out to be a very successful congregation of the freedom movement.

The Babbar Akali movement came into existence in 1922 to set right the government stooges and traitors. It was a group of dauntless patriots. They used to give a chance to the stooges to improve their behaviour. They killed government agents. The government therefore made every possible effort to locate its activists and arrest them. It announced rewards for their arrest. Afraid of the government action, nobody even dared to be seen close to them but at Bhaini Sahib the doors were always open for them. Rattan Singh and Kishan Singh Babbar visited the place several times. They used to come in disguise at odd times and took meals. The Head constable at the police post asked the Satguru about it. He replied that "it was the community kitchen of Guru Ram Singh and meals are offered to everybody without any discrimination, even if one was a sinner of killing a cow. We do not ask who was a rebel or a Babbar or a common traveller. The Head Constable went away in disgust.

The 40-day meditation in seclusion ended in mid September in 1928, which culminated into a ceremony at Harimandir in Bhaini Sahib. The atmosphere remained metaphysical for the entire duration of 40 days, full of recitations, singing of hymns and observance of traditional rituals. Maharaja Gurdial Singh took permission to raise political issues on the concluding day ceremony. The Kukas invited prominent nationalist leaders on that day. They included Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Sardul Singh *Kavishar* (poet), Sayyed Habibullah, Babu Ram Singh, Chaudhary Rambhaji Dutt, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Satpal etc. The congregation ended fruitfully as a big gathering of nationalist leaders struggling for country's freedom with sincere efforts of the Maharaja.

The Maharaja requested the Satguru in writing to allow the

Kukas to openly join hands with the Congress in the struggle for freedom. The Satguru read out the request in the presence of all. He ordained that they may join hands with the Congress but must observe traditional rituals set out by Satguru Ram Singh and take care of their health. He said about himself "Whenever there was the need, he would go extra mile to work with the Congress but he would do so in his own style."

Pandit Basant Singh Bhadana asked as to when there would be a Ram Singh in every home? The Satguru replied that "Peoples' indulgence in recitations of *Naam* and prayers in the first place and on the other, people from all religions and castes Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and from all states Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Mumbai are now enthused about freeing the country. They have raised their voice for non-cooperation with the government. This was the Ram Singh in every household." The Panditji nodded in obedience.

In 1928 on the Kartik Purnamasi (full moon day), the Satguru organized the Birth Anniversary congregation of Guru Nanak Dev ji at Nankana Sahib. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee headed by Master Tara Singh also organized a religious congregation there on the occasion. The Akalis were however divided into two groups. The other group was of uncrowned king Baba Kharag Singh. Masterji was pro Congress. At his request and with permission from the Satguru, Aalim went as a preacher and successfully called for unity among the Sikhs.

Masterji attended the evening congregation and lauded the fight put up by Satguru Ram Singh ji against the British government. He spoke deftly about his position and said, "The difference between him and Baba Partap Singh ji was that he could be replaced as he was elected by the people. But the Takhat was set up by the Baba (Guru Nanak) and could not be replaced by anybody."

Maharaja Gurdial Singh was having bad health. He took a vow from Maharaja Nihal Singh to cooperate with the Congress in the country's freedom struggle. Maharaja Gurdial Singh died in

September 1929 (16 Bhadra 1986 Bikrami). It was a colossal loss to the family, the Kuka movement and the party.

In the next meeting of the Namdhari Darbar, Maharaj Nihal Singh was unanimously declared as the President of the Darbar.

The All India Congress held its historic session from 29th to 31st December 1929 at the banks of river Ravi in Lahore. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was to present the resolution of Puran Swaraj (Full Freedom) at this session. It was to create a good impression about those who had come from Punjab and the Punjabis from other states, especially about the Sikhs. In the words of Prof. Piara Singh Padam:

“The Sikh leadership was divided into three groups at that time. S. Mangal Singh was in favour of the Nehru Report, Master Tara Singh opposed it and Baba Kharak Singh was highly critical and even wanted to boycott the Congress. Masterji was of the view that it would not be prudent to boycott the political organisation all India Congress but the Nehru Report must be opposed. But the Baba ji remained adamant and opposed the Congress, falling into the trap of some government stooges.”⁷ (Sikh History in Brief)

Gurmukh Singh Chamak, Sardul Singh *Kavishar* (poet), Baba Gurdit Singh and Maharaja Nihal Singh etc. alongwith their companions were working in tandem with the Congress.

With the permission of the Satguru, mother Jiwan Kaur was running the *Langar* (community kitchen) for which Baba Dhayan Singh Pathranwale contributed the ration and tents were provided by S. Atma Singh.

As per the wishes of the Satguru, the Subas and Jathedars were active under the leadership of S. Atma Singh and S. Daia Singh Kakkar. Nidhan Singh Aalim, Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta, Pandit Basant Singh, Master Gurbakhsh Singh, Pandit Mansha Singh Kaumi, Munsha Singh Thattewal, Narain Singh, Bhan Singh, Jang Singh Bilga, Ankha Singh Datewala, Inder Singh Chakarvarty etc. were all actively engaged as if the Kukas were participating in a fair. Over one hundred horses were brought by those who were

ordered to do so. The Satguru was present in the Lahore Namdhari congregation on that day, keeping a watch over the situation and giving directions.

The declaration by Baba Kharag Singh that any Sikh whosoever participated in the Congress Session would not be a Sikh, put nearly 75 thousand Sikhs who were present at the congregation in two minds. Gurdit Singh Kamagata Maru found a way out. He wrote in one of his writings:

“In 1929, during the All India Congress session held at Lahore, I saw that about 75,000 Akalis who had come from villages were passing their time in hiding around the fort as the uncrowned leader of the Sikhs Baba Kharag Singh had ordered that whosoever would go to the Congress Session would not be a Sikh. I felt it bad. We started making public announcement among the Akali Groups that whosoever would not go to the Congress, he would not be a Sikh. On hearing this public announcement, thousands of Akalis went to the Congress Session which was organized in tents. We were worried about arrangements for their food. When we saw the non stop community kitchen of the Namdharis near the river Ravi inside the Congress compound, I told them I would provide ration and requested for cooking the food for thousands of Akalis also. They said there was no need to bring ration. The food would be served even if one lakh Akalis came there. I had to bow my head before their magnanimity. If the good work by the Namdharis and the food they served in the community kitchen was not there, no Sikh would have gone to the Session as per the orders of the uncrowned leader. Representatives from the entire country would have gone back with an impression that there were no Sikhs in Punjab. If there were any Sikhs, they had not reached the Congress session fearing the government action for indulging in political activity. But I salute to the wisdom of the leader of the Namdharis Baba Partap Singh ji Maharaj whose able leadership saved the Sikhs from a bad name in history.”⁸

(Sikh History and the Kukas – An Analytical Study)

Avtar Singh Azad, Nahar Singh M.A. and Jaswinder Singh M.A. wrote about the participation of the Namdharis in the Congress Session. They said the Kukas participated with pomp and show. One hundred Kukas in their white robes, riding their horses, led the procession of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Pandit Nehru saluted the Tricolour. The Session ended on 1st January 1930 adopting a Resolution for Puran Swaraj (Complete Independence).

In the words of M.M. Ahluwalia, "The historic Congress Session of 1929, which was boycotted by a section of the Sikhs, was actively attended to by Satguru Partap Singh with a contingent of one hundred horse riders."⁹

(Indian Struggle for Freedom Part II – Chief Editor P.N. Chopra)

After this Session, the British declared Congress an unlawful group. But political activism did not stop. In his capacity as dictator of the Congress party, Maharaja Nihal Singh was arrested while picketing at a wine shop. Pandit Mansha Singh Kaumi took over as dictator after him and took out a procession from Bredla Hall, Lahore shouting, "Pack off oh British, you had ruled enough." He was arrested alongwith the Kukas. Nidhan Singh Aalim succeeded him and took over Charge of the Congress in Lahore. Mother Jiwan Kaur and mother Fateh Kaur reached there from Sri Bhaini Sahib for moral boosting. There was a conference at Mori Gate in Lahore. Alim describes the attendance at this conference to be about 30-40 thousand. When the Conference was told that the Mataji had put on hand woven cotton cloth throughout her life and was under house arrest at Bhaini Sahib till 1923, everybody bowed his head in reverence.

The Kuka Sikhs systematically organized congregations for strengthening their spiritual powers under the guidance of Satguru Partap Singhji. They used to recite Gurbani in traditional music style. The Satguru held a 3-day mystical musical festival to promote it. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, S. Mukand Singh Ambala, Sant Hira Singh and Baba Nihal Singh were its judges. The reciter groups

who stood first, second and third were given away special prizes and every participant reciter was given away a milching cow. It was a very successful festival.

The Satguru proceeded on a visit to Siam (Thailand) in November 1933 alongwith Mata Jiwan Kaur and Sikh devotees. While on his way, he came to know at Kolkatta about factionalism among the Sikhs. In Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar), he was pained to see that the Gurudwara was locked because of factionalism among the Sikhs. He decided to organize a Conference back home in India to bring the Sikhs on one platform. He called the Guru Nanak Conference of All Factions on 14th and 15th October 1934 at Bhaini Sahib. All organizations who believed in Guru Nanak Dev were invited. Bhai Arjun Singh Baghrian was appointed Chairman of the Conference.

The Satguru came to know that some organizations and individuals had put a condition that the Guru Granth Sahib may be read for spiritual awakening and *Ardas* be recited only for the ten Gurus (Namdharis perform *Ardas* for twelve gurus). Satguru Partap Singh agreed to the conditions as he wanted to bring an end to the differences. According to an address to the congregation by Satguru Jagjit Singh ji:

“Among those who participated in the Conference, were many who had said that if Guru Granth Sahib was not displayed for spiritual awakening and *Ardas* was not recited for the ten Gurus only, they would not attend the Conference. Satguru Partap Singh was a large hearted fellow. He said, “Come and do whatever you want to do. But you should unite.” They united and passed all the resolutions unitedly. During the evening congregations, Guru Granth Sahib was displayed for spiritual awakening and prayers were held for ten Gurus only. Satguru Partap Singh gave a strict direction not to raise any issue or talk about him during the congregation. The morning *Asa di War* was held in accordance with Namdhari rituals.”¹⁰

(Wad Partap Acharj Roop)

The honourable participants in this Conference were received at Ludhiana itself. When Bhai Arjun Singh Baghrian, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Sunder Singh Majitha, Principal Jodh Singh, Crown Prince Ardaman Singh reached Bhaini Sahib by car, the whole atmosphere reverberated with sky rocketing welcome ovation by the large gathering.

All honourable elite of the Akalis, Nihang Budha Dal and Tarna Dal, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Nirmal Maha Mandal, Udasin Maha Mandal, Addanshahi Seva Panthi, Nirankaris, Sahijdharis, Shiromani Committee Akal Takhat, Patna Sahib, Hazur Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, Namdhari Panth, etc. participated in the Conference with goodwill. Eventhough Baba Sawan Singh Radhasoami was not a Nanakpanthi, he also attended the Conference. The Conference began with Bhai Arjun Singh Baghrian reciting the supplicatory prayer (*Ardasa*).

Five Resolutions were adopted at this Conference:

- First : Gurbani should be propagated through religious discourses and recitations in Gurudwaras.
- Second : The Nanakpanthi reciters and religious preachers should propagate their religion and should not condemn others.
- Third : Granthis, Preachers, Managers and Attendants in all Gurudwaras should be appointed from the same sect.
- Fourth : Except the Historic Gurudwas, in all other Gurudwaras the disputes under the Gurudwara Act should be closed.
- Fifth : A 15-member Committee was set up under the convenorship of Gurmukh Singh Musafir at the instance of Bhai Baghrian to complete the ongoing tasks and to bring ongoing disputes to a logical end.

This historic Conference lessened the differences among

the Nanakpanthis and brought them nearer to each other. The next Conference was held at Gujranwala from 19th to 22nd April 1935. In this manner, under special inspiration from the Satguru, the unity went on strengthening.

‘Satjug’ continued with its propagation of the religion and patriotism. Punjabi scholars and patriotic writers contributed for the paper. The result was that the ‘*Satjug*’ was listed in the five papers banned by the government for reading by the Army.

It reacted very critically to the hanging till death of Sardar Bhagat Singh. The paper in its edition in 1931 wrote:

“After all, the bureaucracy had presented an example of its meanness. On the one hand, Lord Irwin was day dreaming of creating a peaceful atmosphere by having a pact with Mahatma ji and on the other the same Lord Irwin was giving a proof of his friendship “by giving permission to hang till death Sardar Bhagat Singh who was the soul of the 32 crore Indians!”¹¹

(‘*Satjug*’ 19 Chaitra 1987)

The Congress had come to realize that the non-cooperation movement was started by Satguru Ram Singh, about 50-60 years before Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore, Dr. Rajendra Prasad wrote in one of his writings in 1936:

“In our country, the non-cooperation movement which was spearheaded with a great zeal by Mahatma Gandhi, was preached by Guru Ram Singh among the Namdharis, about 50 years ago. His principles were based on five points: 1. boycott of government jobs; 2. boycott of government schools; 3. boycott of government courts; 4. boycott of foreign goods, and 5. Refusal to obey such laws which are against your conscience.”¹²

(‘*Satjug*’ January, 1936 issue)

The Kukas supported the Congress in 1937 Assembly elections as ordained by the Satguru. The Congress formed governments in Provinces, which was a symbol of its being very popular. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote that the Congress was able to march ahead by treading the same path.

“No Indian can deny or undermine the great sacrifice and the hard labour of Sri Satguru Ram Singh ji in the country’s struggle for freedom which he had put out about three fourth of a century ago. The Congress achieved glorious sccesses by treading the path as shown by the Satguru.”¹³

(‘*Satjug*’ 1938)

With the formation of our own governments, we moved closer to our destination.

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THE AIM – INDEPENDENT COUNTRY

THE CONGRESS FORMED governments in seven states Madras, Mumbai, U.P., Bihar, Orissa, Central Provinces and North West Provinces in 1937 after getting a glorious majority in elections. Next year, it formed alliance governments in Sindh and Assam. But in Bengal and Punjab, neither the Congress nor any other political party could muster majority.

The Sikhs had their stakes in Punjab. The Unionist Party of majority Muslims formed the government in Punjab with Sir Sikander Hayyat Khan as the Chief Minister. He included Sir Sunder Singh Majithia of the Khalsa National Party in his Council of Ministers but the Muslims had no goodwill for the Sikhs. In Kolkatta, H.S. Suhravardy of the Muslim League formed the government.

Apart from the Provinces, there were Princely States. In December 1927, All India Peoples Conference was set up to coordinate their political activities. It held several meetings. In 1939, the State Peoples' Conference was organized in Ludhiana on 17th February. The Kukas participated in this Conference with great enthusiasm. Satguru Pratap Singh dispatched horses from his stable for the procession and led the procession in a car alongwith Jawaharlal Nehru and Pattabi Sitaramiah. Other participants included Maulana Habibul Rehman, Master Tara Singh and Saifuddin Kitchlu, etc.

The Satguru invited all leaders to visit Bhaini Sahib, the next day, the 18 February 1939. On their arrival, they were given a rousing reception by the Satguruji, Maharaj Nihal Singh, Nidhan Singh Aalim, Inder Singh Chakravarty, Sant Hazura Singh Bhuriwale, S. Atma Singh, S. Daya Singh, S. Lachhman Singh and thousands of devotees welcomed them. They became highly emotional on being told of the history of Bhaini Sahib, firing of the Kukas with cannons, continuance of Police Chowki for 51 years

and other government excesses against the Kukas. They were deeply moved and tears rolled down their eyes.

In the afternoon, apart from the already listed speakers, Sarvashri Kishan Singh MLA, Master Kabul Singh MLA, S. Sohan Singh Josh MLA, Kapur Singh MLA, Pandit Muni Lal Kalia, Lala Devraj Sethi, Miss Agatha Harrison, S. Kapur Singh Dhoot addressed the gathering of over ten thousand Kukas and were listened to with rapt attention by the participants. Sant Nidhan Singh Aalim read out the Scroll of Honour.

The horses reared by the Satguru always had a place of pride in horse races. They used to win the races. The British Officers also used to witness such races. In 1939, during one such race, the Punjab Governor Sir Henry Creck enquired about the reason for Nehru's visit to Bhaini Sahib. The Satguru fearlessly replied:

“It is his house. He can visit any time. He explained his miseries and we presented before him our miseries.”

The Second World War began in September 1939. The British Government of India threw the country into it without consulting Provincial Governments. All Congress governments resigned en masse in October 1939 opposing the move. The government did not care for their protest. It started recruitment with the support of its stooges. The British urged the Satguru for army recruitment of Namdhari Sikhs and offered fiefdoms in return. The Satguru disclosed this during his address to the congregation at the *Assu* fair (the fair was held in the seventh month, *Assu* of the Bikrami year 1957 A.D.).

“During the Second World War, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana approached me and requested for a brief statement favouring recruitment. He offered that whatever we could ask for - lands, money, fiefdoms would be provided in return. I told him that we were having an old enmity with them. The British had dishonoured Bhaini Sahib to such an extent that the coming generations would never forgive them for it. Secondly, they were

wasting the money of our motherland in unnecessary wars. What sort of help they expected from us under these circumstances? I told him that I consider their lands and fiefdoms as trifling.”¹

During the war, a brave youth from Bengal, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose made a whirlwind tour of the country and exhorted the people to throw the British out. The government arrested him but on 26th January 1941, he escaped from jail disguised as a Pathan. He reached Germany via Kabul and Russia and headed for Japan after meeting Hitler. He set up the Azad Hind Fauz. He declared war against the British in 1943 and gave three slogans – “Jai Hind; You Give Me Blood, I Will Give You Freedom; March to Delhi.”

Netaji was not unaware of the sacrifices by the Namdhari Sikhs. He wrote in one of his articles:

“The country would forever feel proud of the sacrifices of the Namdhari Sikhs made under the banner for freedom raised by Guru Ram Singh ji. The Indians were passing through a deciding moment. It is expected that the Namdharis who are waging a war for the last three fourth of a century would lead the nation in this cause.”²

His faith in the Kukas made the Netaji feel satisfied when he saw a large gathering of Namdhari Kukas at the Bangkok centre of the Azad Hind Fauz in Thailand. He felt proud in finding a large number of trustworthy patriots. He appointed Seth Gurbuksh Singh Pritam, the elder son of Sant Phoola Singh as his Supply Secretary. Pritam’s younger brother Seth Tarlok Singh was Netaji’s driver and Personal Secretary. The Netaji weighed 83 kilograms and at the inspiration from the Kukas, he was weighed in gold by the people. It was given in writing to him that he was the custodian of their life and properties and could use these in any manner he liked.

The result of the Second World War and India’s destiny would have been different had the two cities of Japan, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not razed to the ground by the Americans in the Atom Bomb attack on 6th and 9th August, 1945.

Satguru Partap Singh started a Khaddar Bhandar (a store of coarse cotton cloth) at Bhaini Sahib to propagate Swadeshi, particularly khaddar. It was inaugurated by the Punjab Pradesh Congress Chief Gopi Chand Bhargava. He also unveiled the indigenous oil seed crusher, spinning wheel, grain grinder, engines and handlooms, etc. used for making swadeshi products.

The Muslim League instead of fighting for the independence of the country was working on a two nation theory. It was highly elated at the resignations of Congress Governments in 1939. The Muslim League at its 1940 Lahore Session declared that the Muslims were a separate community and demanded an independent Muslim nation. Alama Mohd. Iqbal had the same concept in 1930. Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh Movement had turned a bigot by 1888. He was making efforts for harmony among the Punjabis. Master Tara Singh organized a Harmony Conference on 20th October 1941 at Amritsar. As per the wishes of the Satguru, S. Atma Singh, Sant Nidhan Singh Aalim and Sant Inder Singh Chakravarty participated in this Conference. On 9th November, 1941, representatives of all parties and sects attended a gathering at the Sikh National College, Lahore.

In 1942, the Congress gave a call to the British to 'Quit India'. Being utterly nonplussed at this, the government indulged in large scale repression of the people. It started beating, arresting and confiscating their properties. It was but natural that the Kukas were the target as the British government never considered them loyal to it.

Satguru Partap Singh and the Sikhs boycotted education from British schools as per the policy of the Kukas. He inspired the people to learn their mother tongue Punjabi. He found that Urdu was the official language in lower level offices but Punjabi got no recognition. He called a Punjabi Conference in Simla on 6th September, 1942. Bhai Arjun Singh Bagrian chaired the Conference and its Stage Secretary was Prof. Abdul Mazid. Mahasha Iqbal Chand, Prof. Ganga Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Sant Inder Singh Chakravarty, etc. were the main speakers. Among the poets and

lyricists who were highly acclaimed by the audience for their presentations during the five hour long programme at the Conference were: Dr. Faqir, Avtar Singh Azad, Dr. Daler, Lala Sunder Das Aasi, Kartar Singh Ballagan, B.G. Bekal, Babu Hamdam, Daaman Bagbanpuri, Mr. Rai, Teja Singh Sabar, Bachan Gujarkhani, Firozedeem Saraf, Bibi Joginder Kaur, Harbhajan Singh Ratan, Takhat Singh, Baldev Singh Simla, etc. The Resolutions adopted at the Conference were:

1. Punjabi programmes should be broadcast from Delhi and Lahore stations of All India Radio.
2. Punjabi language should be taught upto University level.
3. Rank holding officials who respected Punjabi language should be appointed

In this series, the next Conference was held at Bhaini Sahib under the Chairmanship of S. Baldev Singh, Minister.

Satguru Partap Singh organized a Hindu-Sikh Reconciliation Conference to avoid the after effects of the already vitiated atmosphere. The Conference was organized under the Chairmanship of Seth Jugal Kishore Birla at Bhaini Sahib on 20th March 1943. Goswami Ganesh Dutt, Mahasha Khushhal Chand, Nidhan Singh Aalim, Inder Singh Chakravarty gave speeches on reconciliation at the Conference. In accordance with the Namdhari principles, they stressed on non-violence, Swadeshi and non cooperation with the British government. In the poetic symposium at night, Avtar Singh Azad, Jaswant Rai, Taran Singh Vahimi, etc. made the audience spell bound.

Satguru Partap Singh was keeping a watchful eye on the political upheavels in the country alongside these reconciliation efforts. He used to help and give shelter to the freedom fighters. It is mentioned in the book edited by Prof. Jagmohan Singh that: "Sri Bhaini Sahib was the shelter for many under ground patriots. Chet Singh ji, Aselan, district Lahore and Sukhai of Mala Singh Dalam used to stay at the small well of the Shahidi *Bunga* where *Shahidi Bunga* used to be situated. They were visited at odd

times by patriotic Babbar Akalis Sant Bhagwan Singh Arhbangi, Rattan Singh, Kishan Singh, Master Mota Singh, etc. S. Teja Singh Swantantar and Sohan Singh Josh remained under ground for a long time during the British rule. They were helped and given shelter by Satguru Partap Singh. Former Director of Punjab Public Relations Department Shri Rajinder Pal used to remain in hiding at this place during the British rule wanted in the case for publicity against the government. During the period when he was underground, he spent sometime with the Satguru.³

(Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his companions)

The demand by the Muslim League for the division of the country and the Congress movement against the British to 'Quit India' prompted Sir Stafford Kripps to suggest in 1942 that when the war was over, whatever type of confederation is formed, it would give right to the Provinces to join it or form a government outside it in alliance with other Provinces. It was, in a way, acceptance of the Muslim demand for a separate nation as they were in majority in Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sindh, Bengal and Assam and therefore they could form a separate government. But Punjab was the home for the Sikhs. They felt that the Kripps formula would harm them and therefore they rejected it. It was a different story that the Muslim League also rejected the Kripps formula saying that nothing short of Pakistan was acceptable to them.

Giani Kartar Singh demanded an independent state for the Sikhs during the 1944 All Party Sikh Conference.

The Viceroy Lord Wavell called the Simla Conference on 25th June, 1945 to end the stalemate in the talks between the government and Indian leaders. The leaders from the Congress, Muslim League, Akali Dal and other political parties were invited. Those who participated included Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Abdul Kalam Azad, Acharya Kriplani, Govind Ballabh Pant, Mohd. Ali Jinnah, Liaqat Ali, Gajan Farali Abdul Kius, Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, etc.

For an assessment of the Situation, the Satguru went there and stayed at the houses of his devotees Jaswant Singh and Post Master Darshan Singh. It started drizzling and on finding the Satguru there, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad also stayed there. The discussions among them centred round the move to divide the country which perturbed them. They enquired from the Satguru what his demand was. Taran Singh Vahimi writes about the reply given by the Satguru

“Satguru Ji told Pandit Ji that their country India was getting independence. We did not expect anything from the foreigners. We did not indulge into bargaining with you also. We consider it our faith and duty that our country should prosper. Nehru Ji told in reverence that whatever good was happening, the Satguru was the founder of it and had toiled for achieving it. It was happening due to his good wishes.”⁴ (Jass Jiwan, Part III)

But no concrete result came out of this Conference. Lord Wavell and Jinnah were responsible for it. They were held responsible for wasting everybody's time and energy.

In the 1945 elections in Britain, the Conservative government of Winston Churchill was defeated and the liberal Labour Party formed the government. It sent a mission comprising of Cabinet Ministers Lord Lathik Lawrence, Sir Stafford Kripps and Mr. A.V. Alexander to solve the issue of India's independence. It was known as Cabinet Mission. In January 1946, the Mission visited India and took stock of the elections held in the country from a political point of view. The Mission announced the plan prepared by it on 16th May, 1946. It accepted in a way the Muslim demand for independence. It included the Muslim majority provinces but the Sikhs were termed as minority community and no guarantee was given about their security and justice.

In the Punjab Legislative Assembly, the Muslims had 23 seats, Hindus 9 and Sikhs only 4. The number of the seats was based on the population of each community. Even if the seats earmarked for the Hindus and the Sikhs were put together, their number would

have remained less than the seats for the Muslims, resulting in a communal government. The Sikhs held largely attended public meetings on 9th and 14th June, 1946. The Sikhs belonging to the Congress, Akalis, Nirmale, Namdhari, Nihang and other organizations participated in these congregations. According to Harbans Singh, the speeches by the leaders reflected their concern and bitterness:

“Jathedar (Udham Singh) Nagoke said something special. He said neither Jinnah nor his follower Muslims were the enemies of the Sikhs. Their enemy was the British government which had ditched the Sikhs. He suggested that as the Sikhs had recruited two lakh jawans for the Indian army to fight for the British, in the same manner, Sikhs should recruit at least two lakh jawans to fight for the protection of the nation. Another member of Punjab Legislative Assembly Ishar Singh Majhail said with tears rolling down his eyes that the only salvation from the injustice meted out to the Sikhs by the British could be that they should protect themselves and be ready for sacrifices.”⁵ (Our Heritage)

Other speakers at the Conference included Principal Jodh Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Bawa Bachitar Singh, Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Master Tara Singh and the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat Mohan Singh. Next day, on 10th June, S. Ujjal Singh presented a Resolution to reject the Cabinet Mission Plan which was seconded by Giani Kartar Singh. The Resolution was adopted unanimously. A Sikh Representative board was set up for chalking out the next course of action. The Muslim League passed a Resolution in Mumbai on 27th July, 1946 for direct action. It was a direct confrontation with the law of the land. A member of the League Council Sarkar Abad-ur-Rab Nishtar said in no uncertain words that “Only possibility of getting Pakistan is by killing others. Muslims are not followers of non-violence.” A civil war followed in Kolkatta where hell broke out for the non-Muslims for 4 days from the 16th of August. The killings, arson and setting on fire was allowed and instigated by the Chief Minister of Bengal Suhrawarthy.

An interim Congress government took the oath on 2nd

September, 1946 under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. S. Baldev Singh represented the Sikhs in the government with a Cabinet rank.

The Muslim ire and the mass killings soon spread to Punjab as it was also a Muslim majority Province. The Hindus and Sikhs, who were in a microscopic minority in district Hazara, had to bear the brunt of it in the form of robbery, arson, killings and rape. The Muslims went round in a mad frenzy in Multan, Rawalpindi and other cities, indulging in large scale killings of the Hindus and the Sikhs, arson and robbery.

Nobody listened to Gandhi Ji either in Bihar or Noakhali. He was greatly upset at the incidents of mass killings. He lamented that people call him Mahatma but did not pay him respect worthy of a sweeper even.

The division of the country was imminent. Punjab and Bengal were to bear the brunt of its fallout. Therefore, the Satguru started searching for a secure place for the Kukas in these Provinces. He purchased a large tract of land, next to Sirsa Tehsil (now district) from two wealthy businessmen from Churu Dhanpat Singh and Champa Lal. This tract of land from Jagamlera, Chuchal Kotli and Alipur Kanjarwal measured 12,430 acres. The land was registered on 12 January/18 February, 1947 after collecting money from the Sikhs at the rate of 5,500 rupees per piece of land. The land was later distributed in accordance with the contribution for its purchase.

In 1947, the Namdhari Hola Mohalla was organized at Shekhupura (Bedad) district Gujranwala under the aegies of Satguru Partap Singh. Taran Singh Vahimi wrote about the dictat given by the Satguru to the Namdhari congregation during the Hola Mohalla:

“Let no Kuka ever say that he was not told about the situation. Whosoever wanted to be safe, he should move beyond the Beas river, at least move beyond the Ravi. They should make efforts to send their families out of Lahore district. He also exhorted the Kukas not to indulge in killings, plunder or robbery. They would be spiritually benefitted.”⁶

(Jass Jiwan – Part IV)

The Satguru knew that the Sikhs were simpleton and unaware of the changed situation. Therefore, he visited several villages and asked them to have mercy on him and leave for safer places. He visited Shekhupura, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Sialkot, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Lahore districts etc. in West Punjab. In several villages and cities, the present Guru Satguru Jagjit Singh was sent. They exhorted the Sikhs not to have any attachment to their material property, work or houses. Those who abided by the Guru, benefitted.

On 15th August, 1947, the country became independent but the decision about the Indo-Pakistan border was announced only on 18th August, 1947. The Hindus and Sikhs left Pakistani Punjab for India in caravans to save their lives. Many of them escaped and reached this side. Many lost their lives, their honour and all the wealth and other belongings. Sohan Singh Josh wrote about the communal riots:

“I would never forget the Hindu Muslim communal riots of 1946-47. During these days, it were either the Kukas, under the leadership of Maharaj Partap Singh or the communists who did not allow the communal elements over power them.....They put up a stiff resistance to stop these communal riots. Whatever pride the Punjabis may feel in this principled stand taken by the Satguru is less.”⁷

(Wad Partap Sunio Prabh Tumro)

The Satguru started community kitchens at Amritsar and Sri Bhaini Sahib and sent the migrated Kukas to Chuchal Kotli which was named as Sri Jiwan Nagar. Several migrants had shown the courage and conviction and left for other places.

Thus the Revolution launched for the independence of the country by the Kukas on 12th April 1857 fructified after 90 years of struggle. The country got political independence and the people

joined hands and made vigorous efforts for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

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CONCLUSIONS

SATGURU RAM SINGH had launched the Kuka Movement after a deep thought and meditation for a long time. The British were making Indians their slaves not only politically but also religiously, morally, economically and academically. The wealthy people were mortgaging their conscience in return for fiefdoms. The Satguru woke the people up from their slumber and made them conscious of their conscience.

The Kuka Sikhs were inspired to the hilt and they honoured and followed his principles more than anything else for generations from 12th April 1857 to 15th August 1947. The British rulers of India perpetrated all sorts of cruelty against the Kukas – they were tortured, humiliated, hanged to death, made the fodder for cannons, exiled to the Andamans and Myanmar and confined to house arrests but all these excesses could not wean them away from their principles. The Police Chowki set up for repression of the Kukas in front of Sri Bhaini Sahib was lifted after a long spell of 51 years. Section 144 was imposed putting restrictions on the gathering of 5 or more Kukas but all the repression failed to bow down the Kukas.

No other group in India fought the War of Independence for such a long time as the Kukas suffered the humiliation of the Police Chowki for long years. There is no instance in history of a Police Chowki being set up in front of the main centre of a political party as that of the Kukas.

The British rulers had not written about any other organization as for the Kukas that there was no question of their being loyal to the British. This was enough proof of the Kukas being staunch nationalist. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna wrote after independence: “Let the sacrifices made by the Namdharis be put on the one side of the scale and by entire India on the other, if these did not weigh

heavier, these would not be less in weight also.”¹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, except for the 1857 rebellion, no other political movement put up as stiff a resistance to the British as the Kuka Movement with programmes like non-cooperation, Swadeshi and non-violence. However, some religious and political movements were active such as Brahmo Smaj, Prarthana Sabha, Remakrishna Mission, Theosophical Mission, Radha Soami, Nirankari, etc. There was also the Wahabi Organisation of the Muslims, which was opposed firstly to the Sikhs and later to the British.

The political weapon of non-cooperation of the Namdhari Movement was older than that of Mahatma Gandhi's. This was accepted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Rejinder Prasad, Netaji Subhash Chander Bose and other political and social leaders. Dr. Harbhajan Singh argues:

“From a cursory glance, it appeared that the Namdharis supported the Congress. But morally, the things were just the opposite. The Namdharis had adopted the tools of boycott, non-cooperation and Swadeshi etc. much before the Congress. If we look at it from a historical perspective, it appears that the Congress itself joined the Namdhari movement.”²

(Wad Partap Achraj Roop)

The Kukas were as much believer in God as they were patriots. Humayun Kabir writes about the contribution of Satguru Ram Singh to arouse these feelings:

“With this deep insight into the human behavior, he realised that neither political liberation nor social and economic upliftment would be possible without an improvement in the quality of individual. He therefore laid a great stress on his followers to imbibe a spirit of moral values and religious devotion and service.”³

(Namdhari Sikhs – The Pioneer Freedom Fighters)

He propagated the Sikh rituals. The Head Priest of Sri Darbar Sahib Giani Kartar Singh Kalaswalia writes about the

changes he brought about in the Sikh characteristics:

“The Panth was directionless and forgot the Guru’s teachings

Discarding the Guru’s rituals, it took to vices

Kartar Singh says, there was no alternative in sight

The entire multitude looked destitute

A miracle by the Maharaj, awakened the Panth

The sun had risen in Bhaini village

The great celebrity who offered prayers created the Sikh rituals

His voice carried weight and people had faith in him

His radiant face and his superb actions weighed heavily

He gave the message of prayer to the entire humanity

Kartar Singh says Baba Ram Singh wiped out

the ill desire, anger, greed and infatuation which were at their peak.”⁴

(Sat Jug January, 1930 issue)

The Kuka sect besides being a religious organisation, struggled against the colonial rule from Satguru Ram Singh to Satguru Partap Singh. In the words of Gurbakhash Singh:

“Maharaj Partap Singh had the unique distinction of always pitting his religious organization against the colonial rule. Whether it was within the country or elsewhere, religious organizations were generally pro-government. But the Namdharis, despite their remaining firm in their religion, rebelled against the government. They made big sacrifices and participated in every national movement.”⁵

(Preetlari September, 1959 issue)

The Kukas lagged behind in school and college education till 1947 as they boycotted the British education system. For this reason, the Kukas did not hold high positions in administration, armed forces or the police as they were not trained or specialized in professions because of their boycott of the government service

under the British. But every Kuka Sikh was asked to be literate in Punjabi language.

The Kukas also did not accept the judiciary and saved their money and time by resolving their conflicts through the Panchayats. The Subas contributed a lot in resolving the conflicts.

The Namdhari Sikhs boycotted the foreign cloth for 90 years prior to the independence of the country. They used hand woven cotton cloth (Khaddar) and woolen hand woven blankets and put heaps of foreign clothes on fire at Sankhatre and other places. The Congressmen also showed enthusiasm in the bonfire of foreign clothes.

The peculiarity about the Namdhari movement was that it had its roots in villages in Punjab. Every labourer or a farmer considered it as his own Movement. Lakhs of villagers, devoid of any treachery or greed, were proud of being a Kuka.

A major activity of the Kuka Movement was to help the destitute women, who were not cared for by anybody. She was a sufferer in the household also. The killing of the girl child at birth was considered a virtue. If someone did not kill the girl child, he married her off while still being minor. The women were purchased or sold to run the household or were exchanged in marriages. The Kukas stopped this disgrace to the women folk. The widows were also allowed to remarry. Satguru Ram Singh initially fixed the age for marriage of a girl at 15-16 years but later it was raised to 18 years. In the Independent India, the government had made such a law after many decades.

To put an end to the dowry system and extravaganza at marriages, Satguru Partap Singh asked his followers to solemnise marriages during the congregations. This saved an average household from the burden and the parents from debt. In the marriage ceremony in the Sikh faith (*Anand Karaj*), the sons and daughters of a multi millionaire were married at the same altar as that of the poorest of the poor. The son of a master and that of his driver were married without discrimination at the same altar. The

women folk were respected. The Kukas did not allow marriage of their illiterate children. Therefore, all of them learnt reading and writing, especially their mother tongue and learnt how to pray.

The morals and the character of the Kukas were considered so pious that the British wrote in their documents that:

1. A Kuka does not tell a lie.
2. Kukas do not drink.
3. Kukas can never be faithful to the British.

The Kukas lamented the separation of Satguru Ram Singh after his deportation from the country by the British. They called British as barbarians, firangi and cunning foxes and hated them. The Namdhari writings also prominently displayed anti-British sentiments.

The Kukas had no grudge or repentance over not being in high positions in administration, armed forces or the police force because of their lack of education, backwardness or having no voice in the government. But they were proud of the sacrifices they made for the country. Even now, they are contributing to and are partners in the nation's progress under the guidance of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and wherever they may go, they make a distinct identity for themselves with their hard labour and religious bent of mind.

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Satguru Ram Singh was a great freedom fighter and social reformer who established the Namdhari Panth (Kuka Movement) on 12th April, 1857. He was the pioneer in using non-cooperation as a political weapon against the British rule.

The Kukas made great sacrifices for the freedom of the country. The British rulers of India perpetrated all sorts of cruelty against the Kukas – they were tortured, humiliated, killed, exiled to the Andamans and Myanmar and confined to house arrests. But nothing could deter them from their principles. This book presents a historical account of this movement in a lucid style.

SATGURU RAM SINGH TE KUKA LEHAR, original in Punjabi by Tara Singh Anjan, an eminent writer and historian.

Rattan Saldi, a senior journalist has translated it into English.



The brave Kukas embracing martyrdom in Amritsar - 1871



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